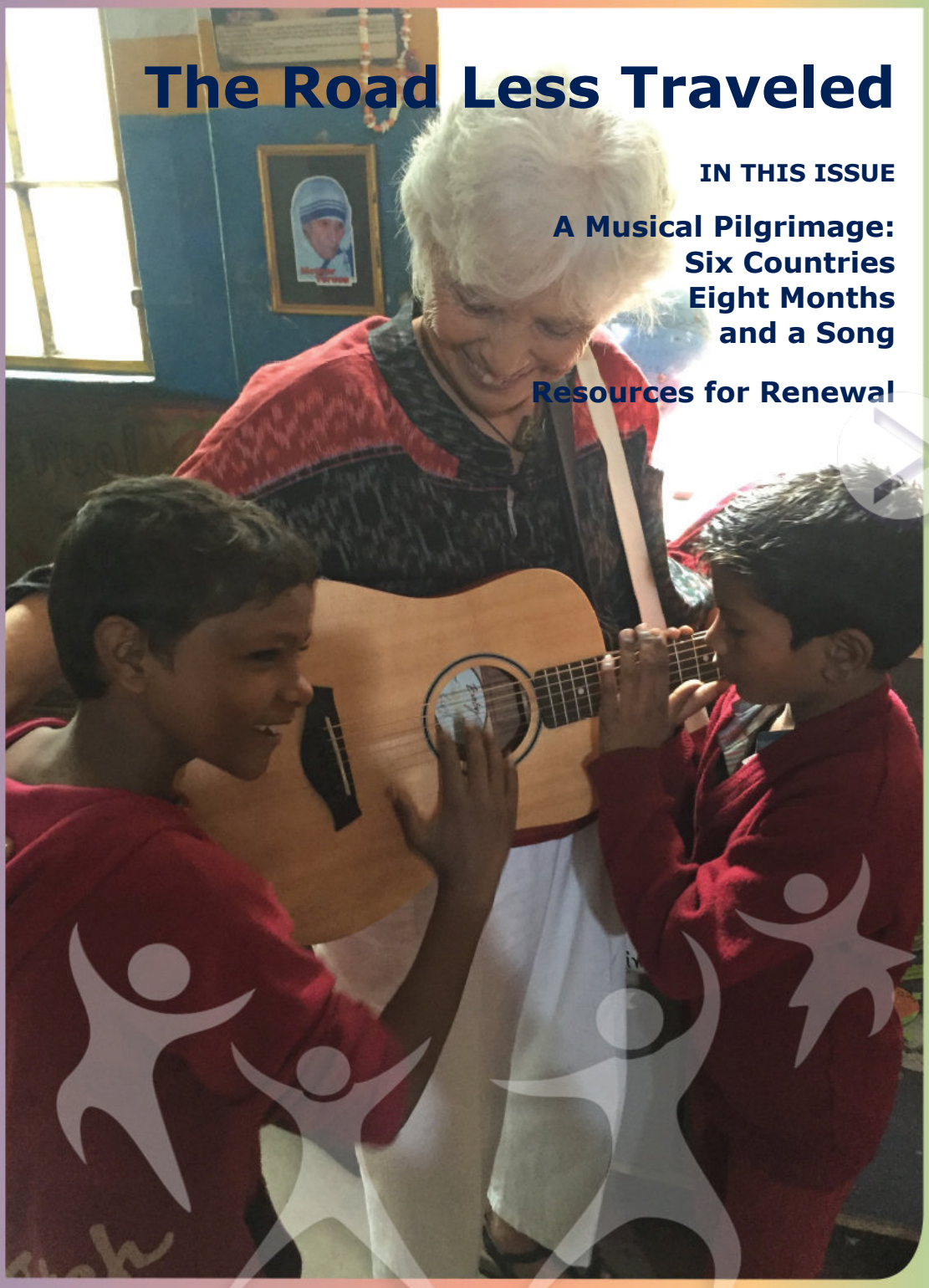
Issue #83 | Spring 2017

# The Road Less Traveled



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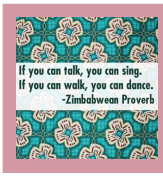


**You Can Dance**
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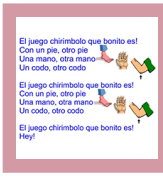
El juego chirimbolo que bonito es!
Con un pie, otro pie
Una mano, otra mano
Un codo, otro codo
El juego chirimbolo que bonito es!
Con un pie, otro pie
Una mano, otra mano
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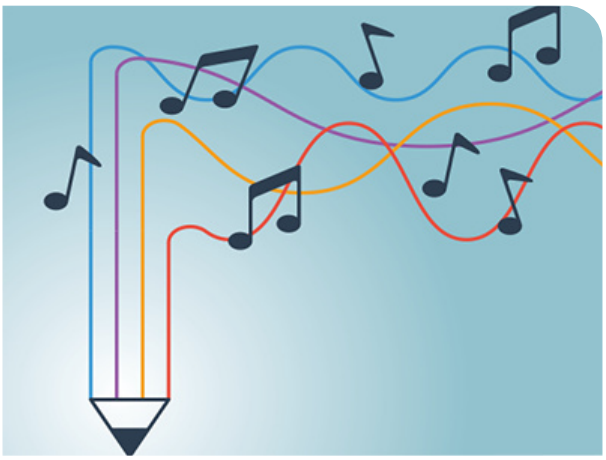


*by Brigid Finucane*

This issue of *PIO!* is filled with spring energy—hopeful and regenerating. Possibilities are palpable and positive, as evidenced in the inaugural message from our new Co-Presidents, Katherine Dines and David Heitler-Klevans. Their vision for the coming year is outlined, but what resonates most profoundly is their assertion that "We have become increasingly aware of the fact that YOU are CMN's most valuable resource, and that CMNers are wonderfully willing to share their skills and knowledge with others. This is often what draws new members into CMN, and what makes them want to stay engaged."

*PIO!* is written by and intended for members. In addition to the columnists and veteran writers that so graciously contribute to our journal, I'm happy to welcome Lily Epstein, Steve Eulberg, Irene Light, Betsy Rose, Laurie Vela, and Andy Zamenes to our digital pages. New voices add multiple perspectives, reflecting the richness of our community. Many of these new voices can be found in the Reports section, which includes conference reflections and accounts of the Magic Penny Award ceremony celebrating the life and music of José-Luis Orozco. You'll also find here an interview with the phenomenal singer, composer, performer, choral instructor, and "vocal activist" (and newly joined member!) Melanie DeMore, who gave the inspiring Conference keynote speech. We mined the *PIO!* archives and struck gold, thanks to Phil Hoose's gentle interview with Fred Rogers, originally published in Issue #19/20, Summer 1995.

Two themes intertwine through this issue. The first is "The Road Less Traveled," the springboard for the remarkable account of Betsy Rose's multifaceted musical pilgrimage to parts of Asia and Africa. Dave Kinnoin and Irene Light also write about two organizations that provide tangible heart and soul support for children in need—Songs of Love and TAFFY Presents.

The second theme is "Resources for Renewal." In the search for resources that energize and sustain us, we might do well to look to Lisa Atkinson's "You Can Dance," one of this issue's designated CMN Anthems and one of many blooms in a bountiful bouquet of songs. For more ideas, please see the "Resources for Renewal" article that will hopefully become a recurring feature. I queried members about what resources inspired and continue to inspire their work. The replies are illuminating—and prompted me to purchase a number of the books recommended! The first contributors are, with one exception, those authors who wrote feature articles in the last three issues of *PIO!.* Board

members and *PIO!* columnists will be represented in the next issue—stay tuned!

And speaking of columnists: Peter Alsop, long-time contributor of the always thoughtful "Thoughts To Chew," will debut a new Question and Answer column in the Fall issue that considers the "bigger questions"—and adds Stuart Stotts as co-contributor. The full announcement is at the end of the column, but the most important thing to know is that this new format will only work with your help—and questions!

It takes a village to make a journal, and a village to appreciate it. Please read, discuss, and share what you find. Share it freely. Feedback is welcome—as are suggestions for what articles, issues, or themes *you* want included or addressed. I look forward to hearing from you!

# A Musical Pilgrimage

## Six Countries, Eight Months, and a Song

*by Betsy Rose*

Singing with street children in Sarnath, India, at Buddha's Smile School

### Introduction

In 2015–16, I went on a solo musical pilgrimage to six countries in Asia and Africa, singing with children, women, and human rights workers. It was part sabbatical, part midlife reboot, and part mission to learn how our special brand of children's music and community singing can open doors and hearts in other countries, building bridges across all kinds of differences.

We all know that song is a natural connector, heart opener, and friend-maker. Could it transcend language and cultural differences? Could it be a vehicle for learning, discovery, and friendship? The answer is a resounding YES!

Buddha's Smile School, Sarnath, India

On a personal level, I hoped to examine some of my own Western perspectives and subconscious assumptions, shake myself up a bit in the service of returning with a wider and deeper understanding of my own and others' humanity. In a shrinking planet where our very survival depends on knowing, understanding, and working together globally, a United States–centric worldview is ineffective, limited, and even destructive. I was hungry to pop that bubble and be changed.

*Any of you could do what I did—and you would be welcomed with open arms in the communities I was blessed to visit.* I hope this report will be helpful in your musical work, wherever you find yourself.

### Why, How, and Where's the Money?

**Why**

In 2014, I was sixty-four years old, my parents were gone, my only son was off in college, and I had my partner's support for whatever direction I chose to take. I was unencumbered and free to listen to a "still small voice" within, one that other responsibilities had drowned out for years. I'd been working with children and in social justice "artivism" for many decades, and while the work was worthy and wonderful, I personally felt hungry for a new "growing edge"—

something fresh and new in my musical and public life.

**How**
It helps to have been singing and otherwise being a public presence for forty years! Being deeply involved in Buddhist practice and communities, my connections in Asia, especially Thailand, abounded. Friends and associates in the United States are people who tend to have travelled internationally—as volunteers, members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), funders, spiritual pilgrims, or just adventurers—and they know people who are doing great work in developing countries.

Once I announced my plans and where I thought I'd be going, contacts flooded in.

"Oh, I know a great project for girls in Kathmandu."

"My daughter volunteered at a school for street kids in Varanasi, India."

"I'll connect you to a Buddhist monk in Thailand who has helped start several schools for youth founded on Buddhist values."

It was almost overwhelming! And one contact led to another.

**Where's the Money?**
Personal funds for this venture were nonexistent. It did not fit my vision to pursue compensation by singing in private middle and upper class schools and settings. I went back to my inner voice, this time with a request: "Okay, Spirit, if I'm supposed to do this, you find me the money."

I learned that my alma mater, Wellesley College, had an alumnae travel fellowship. Now, in my limited worldview, lefty/progressive feminist folk artists weren't generally fellowship material (no published books, not Dean of Academic Department, not head of an NGO), but the whole venture was so touched by improbability and imagining the unimaginable that I went ahead. I wrote the proposal while caring for my dying mom, which practically tore my brain in two, alternating between heart-centered, emotional care for her body and spirit, and left brain detailing of itinerary, budget, mission, resume, and more. "This is a terrible application," I thought over and over as I ran from computer to bedside and back. "It's completely mediocre and I won't get the Fellowship anyway. Give up. Focus on mom, and forget the Fellowship."

But that dogged inner voice said, "No way! Go ahead and submit it. Let THEM decide whether or not you're a viable candidate."

I was the most surprised person in the world when I learned I was one of the three chosen grantees! I could write a whole other article about this experience, but here and now I want only to say that if you have a big dream to travel and sing in the outside world, don't narrow your thinking about finances. There are so many ways to find funds through social networks, your professional fan base, family, small foundations, crowdsourcing, obscure fellowships, and more. My lesson was this: If there's a deep inner call, and the Universe wants it, your dream will come together. Have faith, be bold, forge ahead, and see what opens up.

## The Journey

My pilgrimage began in Thailand, where I spent a month singing in Buddhist-based private academic schools, retreating in a historic Thai Forest Tradition

monastery and several other retreat centers. After a family visit in Australia and a short swing through Bali (singing at a midwifery center and a "green" school), I was on to India for a month. Main stops were Ranchi (in the new state of Jharkhand, a largely tribal area), Bodh Gaya (where the Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree and was enlightened), Sarnath (another historic Buddhist site), Delhi, and Dharamsala (home of the Dalai Lama and the exile Tibetan community). After that, I spent six weeks in Nepal, splitting my time between Kathmandu and Pokhara, the latter being a popular launch point for trekkers. In spite of a sprained ankle, I did "jeep trek" to the Mustang region, the Annapurna region, and very near Tibet.

From Kathmandu I flew to Paris (whole other article there about culture shock), walked parts of El Camino de Santiago—an ancient Christian pilgrimage—in France and Spain, and enjoyed some family visits from my son in the Netherlands and my sister in Ireland. This was personal time, not covered by the Fellowship.

Schoolgirls in Pokhara, Nepal participate in Wall of Hope violence prevention campaign

My final adventure took me to Kenya, where I spent wonderful and very heart-opening time working with an organization that supports women exiting prostitution and abuse. In Liberia, I spent precious days with village women who were part of the dramatic peace movement that stopped a bloody civil war in 2004, and are still actively working on nonviolence in their country. This is a little known and incredible story. I recommend viewing the riveting documentary *Pray The Devil Back To Hell* (http://www.forkfilms.net/pray-the-devil-back-to-hell/), which explores how a narcissistic, violent dictator was peacefully overthrown.

With the foundation of a few contacts in each country, it took very little time for the grapevine to kick in. Word of mouth and social connecting is a deep part of most of the cultures I visited. So I had no lack of opportunities to sing and share and learn and fall in love with the amazing people I met.

Crossing the language barrier, discovering or inventing ways to connect with children in challenging situations, and getting some perspective on what was actually useful and appropriate in these very new settings were vital tools I needed to fulfill my mission.

**Language**

Language is at the heart of a song, and a staple of my children's music repertoire is "zipper songs" where children add their own words to a preexisting song form. How much English would these children know, or, if singing in their own language, how could I guide them to find syllables that fit the beat? Songwriting with young people is a challenge right here at home. What would work in Hindi, Nepalese, and Thai??

Before leaving, I worked with translators, selecting about eight songs for young people and for women from my "A list" of tried and true favorites. My criteria were that songs were short, simple, singable, and not too many words, e.g., "This Little Light of Mine," "We Shall Overcome" and "May You Be Happy (http://www.songsforteaching.com/gentlewind/calm_s/10mayyoubehappy.pdf)" from my CD, *Calm Down Boogie* (http://www.betsyrosemusic.org/music/listen).

A small group of wonderful Bay Area women translated these songs into Hindi, Nepalese, and Thai. They were not musicians, so the process was twofold. First, they made a literal translation, and second, I'd try singing their words and we would alter and modify them to fit the rhythm. The results turned out very well when field tested; the hardest part for me was wrapping my tongue around the unfamiliar languages while leading the group and playing guitar. But this turned into a wonderful chance for the children to teach ME, and for me to be the bumbling learner.

**Leveling—Lifting Them, Lowering Me**

As time went on I found more and more ways to be the learner, to "level" the ground between us a bit, to pop the bubble of prestige and privilege that surrounded me. Here's a quick digest of leveling activities I discovered:

Silly Self–Deprecation With Both Adults and Children

I found ways to make fun of myself, nonverbally—to be clumsy, to use body language, to be playful, to make exaggerated gestures and facial expressions —so the children couldn't help but laugh at me (not something you are supposed to do to an honored guest!). One example: In a tribal government school in Ranchi, India, a large group of shy, curious children sat on the courtyard ground as I was introduced with much pomp and solemnity ("This is an important person, children; you be good"). The front row of small girls would look at me, then hide their eyes and giggle, then look again, and repeat. Why are they giggling, I wondered? It occurred to me that perhaps I was the first white person to visit them for more than a governmental or NGO look-see. I was actually going to interact with them! Instinct kicked in, and I proceeded to do exactly what they were doing: look at them, then hide my face and giggle, then look again, and repeat. This broke the ice; I was no longer playing the role of distinguished guest!

Find a Way for Them to Teach Me

In Nepal, there is a universally known folk song, "Resham Firiri (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPzbGpe8HN0)," and after hearing it sung by street musicians, in cafés, by a traditional instrument band, and on the radio, I HAD to learn it. When I met a new group and wasn't quite sure how to connect, I would start singing it. Faces lit up in smiles, hands clapped, voices carried the song along, and we were off and singing! The looks they exchanged with each other as I started to sing said to me, "She likes our music! She's one of us!" The song has many lines that I never could wrap my tongue around, so I would ask them to coach me, break it down, and repeat with me. They instantly became the teachers, and this role reversal was key to the magic of whatever happened next.

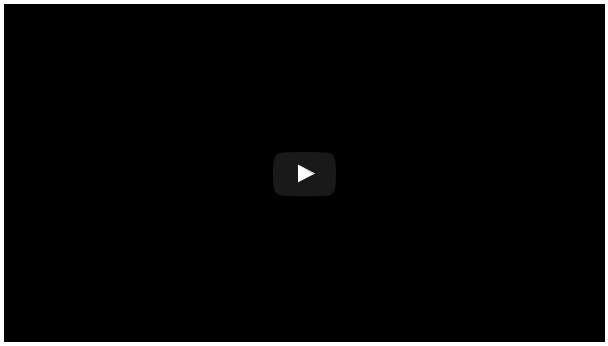
**Prop: Guitar as Sidekick!**

How many of you use props like puppets and stuffed animals to widen the scope of personalities onstage? My prop was my guitar. I played many games involving the guitar, having the children guess what was in the case and suggesting silly options—an elephant? a snake?—before dramatically revealing the long-awaited guitar. She had a voice, and said "hello" to them through a quick, loud guitar riff or a silvery harmonic twang high on the neck, and I invited the children to greet her in THEIR language, which led to a simple improvised "hello" song in several languages.

**Gifts, or Coals to Newcastle?**

The countries I visited have highly developed musical cultures, with strong dance and song traditions that are an integral part of their family, community,

and religious life. Wherever I visited, I was greeted ceremonially with song and dance. I wondered, what on earth was I doing bringing songs to Africa, the source and birthplace of the communal, collective, oral tradition music-making I have gratefully drawn on for much of my work? But I learned that there were more nuanced, unexpected ways that my music enriched their lives.



The Gift of Participation and Play

Public schools (called Government Schools) in India and Nepal are modeled after the traditional British educational style where teachers talk and children repeat or take notes—in other words, rote learning and repetition.

The teachers I observed were often unsmiling and severe. The atmosphere was serious and controlled. So when I arrived on the scene, using exaggerated body language, hand clapping, and call and response games, and then launching into a song in their language, the children were at first bemused, then delighted, then raucous and fully involved. This was not their usual school day activity!

Government School, Ranchi, India

With the very young there was no real shared language, which allowed me to become more extroverted, funny, silly, and bold than I have ever been in the United States. It is a wonderful gift to have to constantly improvise. And yet the core musical skills remain and DO translate completely. How many of us have found that clapping rhythm patterns and asking the audience to echo them is a foolproof starter to an assembly or concert? How many of us have learned how to "change it up" suddenly? To go from loud and funny to quiet and whisperingly confidential, intuitively feeling what will keep the youth on their toes, not knowing what to expect next? These were invaluable skills that came with me in my tool bag.

Creative participation is not—in the government schools I visited—a value. Education was serious work, and fun was not part of preparing to function in a world economy. This made zipper songs challenging, and I learned that soliciting new words and ideas from the students (upper elementary through high school, who had a working knowledge of English) took some time and coaching. It made me realize how most young people in the United States are raised in a culture of participation, where the individual's ideas and input are valued, and creativity and innovation are encouraged. I've found children in the United States, unless traumatized or otherwise shut down, assume their voices, their ideas, and even their feelings are of value and interest to the group.

The Indian and Nepalese public educational systems focus on absorbing and storing knowledge. Students are taught to listen to and respect authority, learn one's place in the system, and be a cohesive part of a group without disrupting or standing out. But there is a hidden gift within these communal cultures where the group has a higher value than individual identity and agency. I experienced a genuine sense of caring for and being responsible to each other, of putting the group before the individual. This experience was

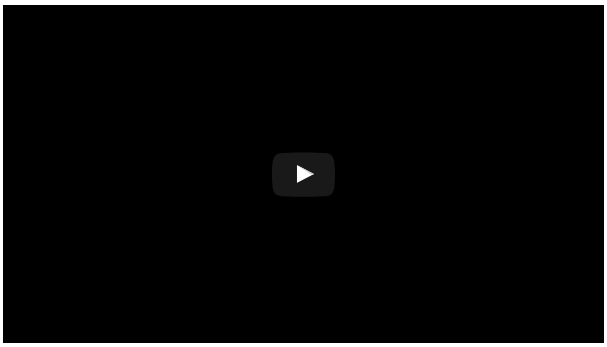
precious beyond words and forever changed how I see our culture; it revealed the isolation and insulation, competitiveness, and self-centeredness that are often the by-products of individualism and capitalist democracy. Every culture is "a package deal," and as the deficits of our own became more tangible to me, the gifts of our global south neighbors came beautifully into focus.

Government School, Ranchi, India

The Gift of Focusing on Girls' Education and Empowerment

The "Girls Be Strong" song-video project was key to my connection with girls. Before leaving the United States, I wrote an exuberant a cappella song (published in this issue) about girls' capacities and dreams, and secured a small grant to support the filming and editing of a music video. In the communities, schools, and projects I visited, we would sing and learn the song in English, and I engaged them in a songwriting process to add a verse from their cultural perspective. What are girls' dreams in a village in India? In a slum in Nepal?

Why are girls' educational opportunities still so limited in parts of Asia and Africa? Economics, combined with traditional and long-held cultural beliefs and practices, are at the heart of it. Even government education costs money. Uniforms are universally required and worn in all but the poorest schools, and books and materials must be paid for, often along with a small tuition fee. This puts tremendous pressure on poor families and has a number of oppressive results for women and girls.



If money is scarce, tuition money will go toward the boys in the family. Their education comes first, and an educated male has much more access to a better-paying job than an educated female. The family will rely on the earnings of their grown child(ren), so educating the boy is a practical family investment. It is assumed, at least in rural or tribal areas, that a girl will marry young—child brides are still not uncommon—and bear many children. She will go live with her husband's family. Why invest in education for a young mother who is leaving home anyway?

Another tragic consequence of school costs is that some impoverished mothers turn to prostitution to supplement the family income in order to educate their children. And when poverty is grinding and inescapable in a family, a girl child may be sold into sexual slavery so that other children can be fed. I saw firsthand how poverty is a women's issue, how violence against women and trafficking are direct products of poverty, and that just as girls and women are the primary victims of male warfare, the same is true of economic oppression. The passion for girls' education that I saw in my travels reflected a growing understanding that the country as a whole could not progress while women remained impoverished and uneducated. Listen to Nunu from Liberia, and the YUWA schoolgirls in India, as they speak their passion and determination to break out of traditional limitations in the "Girls Be Strong" video.

Other Gifts

*Presence*
A Westerner interested enough to visit, especially in poor or tribal communities, means a lot. The key is to be present and respectful, and engage in fun and interaction. By reaching out to those you meet with warmth, humor, and humility, you implicitly honor them in their world.

*Musical messages of empowerment*
Several of the songs I brought expressed messages of empowerment, dignity, hope, and future possibilities for girls, children, and women. "We Shall Overcome" is widely known, especially in India and Nepal where the tradition of Gandhi looms large, and is core to India's own story of liberation from British colonial oppression. And when I launched into it in their language, barriers between us fell in an instant. Faces lit up and voices soared as this white-skinned, elder stranger started in with "Ham Hunge Kamiyab" ("We Shall Overcome" in Hindi, India's official language).

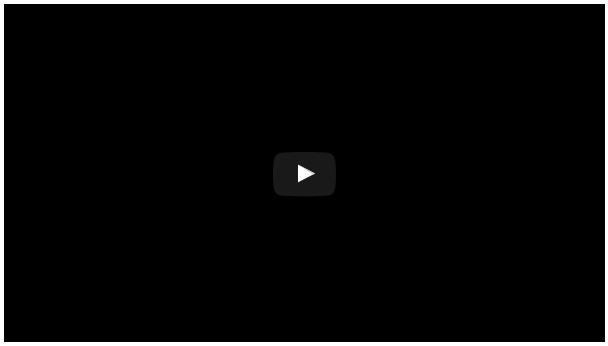
Girls who sang in the "Girls Be Strong" video, posed in front of a mural created for the Wall of Hope violence prevention campaign, Fairyland School, Kathmandu, Nepal

"We Shall Overcome" became one of my go-to, never-fail songs, and unexpectedly became a vehicle for the ongoing work of "leveling." Creative group songwriting, where we added new verses to a familiar tune, was new to them, and I could feel the lifting of spirit and brightening of heart as they made and sang new verses: "Girls will not give up…" "Boys support the girls…" "Women's power is rising…" "We can change the world…." The message of overcoming, in the context of poverty, low sense of possibilities, idealization of the West, earthquake impact, war, disease, and oppression of girls and women conveyed a core message that "people like you HAVE changed history. You are a future world changer." Street kids, village girls and women, former prostitutes, developing women leaders, all loved singing and making new verses.

In India and Nepal the song allowed me to share with young people (and sometimes adults) the story of Gandhi's profound impact on Martin Luther King, Jr., and to thank them for helping *us* in our struggle for equality. And in Africa, more poignantly and painfully, I found myself telling Kenyan and Liberian youth a much-abridged story of how slavery brought African people to our country, and how our current wealth and advanced economy and society is due to centuries of unpaid slave labor that built our economy. I shared that the songs created by African slaves became the music that fueled our own songs of freedom. I found myself expressing deep sorrow and regret, on behalf of my country, for this shameful history. While many students learn the history of the worldwide slave trade, I'm not sure they had ever heard someone link current American privilege and success to it. Their faces were solemn, eyes wide, listening deeply. I'll never know what impact this all had, but it felt real and right to me in the moment.

*Teaching English through song*
I stumbled on an additional gift that singing offered: assisting English learners in developing language skills. Singing slows everything down and extends words and syllables, so the tongue and mouth feel the shape of syllables and the subtleties of pronunciation. For example, there is no "sh" sound in Nepalese, so "We *shall* overcome" came out as "We *sall* overcome." I quickly improvised ways to practice the "sh" sound, and of course, the repetition of the verses and choruses gave singers many opportunities to practice without it

feeling like a drill.



## And Now—the Big Lesson(s)

Entering into so many unfamiliar communities and unexpected situations kept me off balance in an uncomfortable and delightful way. Asia does not run on the same clock and calendar paradigm that Westerners rely on. I found that plans changed in a wink and start times were vague suggestions, often easily delayed. Flexibility and faith became my guiding practices. I had to trust my heart and my intuition, because they were all I really had. Whatever plan I *thought* I had was often unrelated to what actually unfolded in real time.

My favorite example of this occurred at a middle-class K-12 private school in Delhi, one of the very few I encountered. After a day of working and singing with the students, I was invited back for a teacher training the next day.

I asked, "Will these be teachers who saw my program today?"
The administrator answered, "Oh yes."
"Mostly primary school teachers?"
"Yes."
"So they want to learn more about how I bring music and song and mindfulness to children?"
"Yes."

As we drove to the campus the next morning, I asked again,
"Who are the teachers I'll be working with, and how many?"
The administrator answered, "Well, these will be college professors, probably about a hundred."
Gulp. Shift gears. Don't panic!
"And what is it you would like me to teach them?"
"Well, they struggle a lot with stress. Could you teach something about mindfulness and stress?"

This was five minutes out from the start of the program.

I have experience teaching mindfulness and have worked with adults, but this was so unexpected that I felt the ground drop out from under me. But as a good guest and presenter, I smiled and said, "Of course, I'd be happy to."

But it didn't end there.

The program began with a formal welcome and introduction of me (the honored guest thing, again), and as the gentleman at the podium, whom I had never met, began listing my accomplishments and history—mindfulness, education, children—my thoughts drifted away but were jerked back by these words: "Her life as a former model in Italy, and her connections with the Italian mafia…." My host and I exchanged horrified glances, and together we shouted "No! No! No!" Much laughter, much embarrassment, and the speaker quitted the stage in disarray. And then, there I was in front of the mostly male, mostly engineering faculty, with nothing but my breath and a prayer to guide me. And I had a blast! And so did they! Intuition and faith carried me far beyond where planning and preparation could have gone and created a more lively, authentic program.

## My Main Mistake

Buddha's Smile schoolchildren, Sarnath, India

It took me a while to grasp the reality of how language and cultural differences required a change of approach in teaching songs or hand and body motions. My two main course corrections were to simplify and "dial back." Many children I sang with were street or beggar kids who had little or no structure to their "home" life. Traumatized and unregulated in various ways, they couldn't concentrate easily on anything complex. Those of you who work with children in similar conditions (homelessness, foster care, abuse, etc.) have undoubtedly found this to be true as well. When I felt children stumbling, or noticed they were lost or not fully engaged, I would dial back and break the song or activity into much smaller units of learning. I'd go through a phrase or motion several times. If I started a program with song, and it wasn't connecting, I'd shift to hand clapping patterns the group echoed with lots of motion and some silliness to get everyone on board. Then on to more complex activities.

## What Now?

I hope my experience whets your appetite for musical adventure outside of your familiar world. We children's artists are uniquely suited for cross-cultural friendship! Working with children, anywhere in the world, inspires playfulness, flexibility, openness, invention, curiosity, and letting go of agendas and plans. It involves tuning in and sensing what is needed in the moment. These are the necessary skills for crossing any borders, including in our own country.

I'm happy to share my resources with you, be it international contacts, translation resources, funding ideas, or anything else. CMN member Stuart Stotts is also versed in this transnational music making, and between us and others, perhaps a CMN international brigade of Global Troubadours can be prepared and launched into a world that is more welcoming, more friendly, and has more to give back than I ever could have imagined.

We are needed, we are gifted in special ways, and there is much to do!

*You can find more videos from my travels on my YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/betsyalysrose/featured).*

# Medicine of Music

## The Songs of Love Foundation

*by Dave Kinnoin*

The Songs of Love Foundation (https://www.songsoflove.org) is the "medicine of music" in action. It provides personalized, uplifting songs, free of charge, for children between the ages of one to twenty-one who are facing tough medical, physical, or emotional challenges. I have been a volunteer songwriter/music producer/singer and talent recruiter for Songs of Love Foundation since 1999.

Here's how we work: A parent or caregiver first fills out a profile sheet giving the name, age, gender, family members, friends, and pets of the child. Information on the child's interests and type of preferred music is also gathered, and the pronunciation of names included. A songwriter puts all this information into a musical story, and then a professional-sounding track is produced, either by the songwriter or a music producer. An excellent singer provides the vocal. Sometimes there are backing vocals and sound effects; other times, the song is performed more simply. It depends on the song and the needs of the child for whom it is written. The song does not mention any disease or other medical or mental or physical malady—it celebrates the unbroken, inner spirit of the child.

An MP3 of the sound recording is due three weeks after receipt of the profile sheet. This deadline must be honored. The song and sound recording belong to Songs of Love Foundation in perpetuity. So if you're wondering if you can retain ownership of any of what you put into your "song of love," the answer is no. Songs of Love Foundation makes a CD with an insert containing the lyrics and mails it to the family promptly. The child often goes crazy with joy at getting her or his own song and plays it over and over and over again. We believe this is therapeutic. We have many testimonials and videos. Sometimes a child dies, and the song of love serves as a cherished memento.

> **"You might ask, "What do the songwriters, singers, music producers, and musicians get?" One thing: the deep, eternal satisfaction of delivering the medicine of music to a child and family who really need it."**

You might ask, "What do the songwriters, singers, music producers, and musicians get?" One thing: the deep, eternal satisfaction of delivering the medicine of music to a child and family who really need it. I have known this satisfaction for eighteen years and would be pleased to tell you about it in greater detail.

We have delivered over 26,000 songs of love and earned the coveted "Best In America (http://www.independentcharities.org/best_in_america)" Seal of Excellence from the Independent Charities of America. Recipients are judged based on the criteria of meeting the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. Of the over one million charities operating in the United States today, fewer than 2,500 have been awarded this seal. That's one out of four hundred. Our integrity is unassailable.

Writing and producing songs for sick kids has made me a better person and music man. My sons have watched and listened all these years, and now they, too, are Songs of Love Foundation volunteers. It's a thrill to see them grow to be kind and generous and hard working. Concurrently, they have honed their production skills with Garage Band, ProTools, microphones, amps, outboard gear, and more. (Outboard gear is used to alter how a musical instrument sounds. These external effects units can be used either during a live performance or in the recording studio. They are separate from the effects that may be applied by using a mixing console or a digital audio workstation.) They've become better musicians and learned to play a wide array of instruments. Now they don't need to rely on others as often when a certain sound or arrangement is called for. Sometimes that need may arise at 2:00 a.m. We've filled the garage with drums, bass, keyboard, many guitars, pedal steel, mandolin, banjo, resonator guitar, ukulele, pennywhistle, harmonica, percussion, amps, effects pedals, and much more. It has stretched us and taught us to be resilient and resourceful. Meeting a deadline, even when it's inconvenient, has promoted discipline. And doing it together has strengthened the respect, trust, and love between us. Plus we've had a lot of fun!

When I write a song of love, I approach it the same way I approach all other children's songwriting assignments: I identify the child's level of comprehension and decide what's most effective regarding first, second, or third person point of view (I almost always choose first person). The song title is the child's first and last name, and the child's name is always featured in the chorus. I identify what information is best suited for the verse, chorus, and bridge, and mark each category with a different colored highlighter pen. Clearly the chorus must sail with the core meaning element(s) of the story, so I often write it first, and then check the profile sheet to see what's left over. I keep in mind that I'm not writing the song just for the child, but also for the family, especially the parents. At times I take liberties with the storyline to liven it up, but I always know where that line is that I shouldn't cross, and I don't cross it. I just wrote a lyric for a two-month-old. I used the first person point of view and sang to the family, including the cat and dog. The parents like rock and roll, but I chose to do a tender waltz and gave a light-hearted nod to rock and roll in the bridge. I think two months old is too early to bang your head very much.

> **"And there's the memory of falling asleep hearing a song of love come to life in my son Oliver's studio, knowing he had forsaken a party to bring joy to a child and family."**

Many Songs of Love Foundation songwriters work independently, but many others, like me, usually collaborate. I have built alliances with other writers, producers, studio owners, singers, and musicians, many of whom I work with on paying projects. We often squeeze in a song of love recording when other talent is already in the room. I think of ways I can be of use to those who have what I need, and I keep the wheels well greased. Tit for tat is alive and well. Maybe the studio owner needs his grape ivy trimmed while she's mixing the song! Most of the time my collaborators are happy to be part of the team with no payment or bartering. So remember, if you lack the resources to produce

your song of love, simply ask those who do have the resources to join you in this wonderful gift. I've noticed that most people are glad to help when they believe in the project. There's no need for you to pay out of pocket to get the job done. If you want more advice on this, you may call me on the West Coast at 626-441-6024.

Collaboration takes place in person or via phone, Skype, or e-mail. In one circumstance, I needed an electric guitar part. I e-mailed the track to my pal Randy Sharp, he added the electric guitar, and he e-mailed it back to me. I mixed everything and said to myself, "Now it's right!" Another time I needed some character voices and caught my son Grady for fifteen minutes before he left for a gig. Earphones on, "mic check, check, check, remember to smile… GREAT!" And there's the memory of falling asleep hearing a song of love come to life in my son Oliver's studio, knowing he had forsaken a party to bring joy to a child and family. Or my pal Jimmy Hammer, who sent me a new mix of a song of love we'd worked on. He said he'd tweaked the bass. He gave the song of love the same devotion to excellence he gives his paid work. That gives me goosebumps.

Sometimes the foundation hears from the family that received a song of love and passes on a letter or picture or video link. On rare and special occasions, I actually get to meet a song of love child when a parent sees my name on a concert flyer and decides to visit after the show. But whether I ever hear from the family or not, I know in my heart that I did my best for them and that my gift will last forever. And I'm okay with that.

**"When you're writing a song of love, you are a magnificent winner. No one can take that away from you."**

A last memory to share: Once, late at night (I usually go to bed early), my son Grady came out to my studio and saw me crying. Then he looked at my computer screen and quickly inferred I had become emotional over the lyrics to a song of love written there. Wordlessly, he hugged me, nodded an acknowledgement, and left. It's not a sad event to write a song of love, but sometimes I see precious and poignant things on the profile sheet that make the child come alive in my mind and heart. Sometimes I become scared that things might not go well for her or him. If I forget to hold my stomach muscles tight, tears can come. Not debilitating tears. They pass and I get the job done. But make no mistake: writing a song of love is a big deal.

I'm proud that my back pocket often has a profile sheet and unfinished lyrics folded in with my other work. When I sit down, I feel it. I get out my smartphone and record a melody idea or a baseline or a drum beat. Maybe I've had a rough day—one an outsider might say qualified me as a loser. When you're writing a song of love, you are a magnificent winner. No one can take that away from you.

To learn more about becoming a Songs of Love Foundation (https://www.songsoflove.org) volunteer, please call 718-441-4588 in Forest Hills, New York, or e-mail songwriter@songsoflove.org.

# Everybody Wins!

## TAFFY PRESENTS Brings Song, and More, to Underserved Families

*by Irene Light*

You are a performing artist, a visual artist, and/or an educator. You are excited about bringing your special programming to underserved children who really need to have their spirits lifted. You *know* that you can help.

Welcome to the world of Theatre Arts Festival for Youth (http://www.taffypresents.org/) (TAFFY), the place that connects the world of children's entertainment and education to your talents. While TAFFY, the parent organization, and its division TAFFY Presents (https://www.facebook.com/taffypresents/) both are oriented towards reaching underserved children and families, TAFFY performances are directed toward large-scale events while TAFFY Presents features "quality interactive fine arts and performing arts programs plus educational workshops in theater, music, dance, and puppetry for schools, hospitals, libraries, and more."

I, Irene Light, am your TAFFY Presents Tour Guide and Resource Person (so I have been told). I am also a former public school music teacher who can quote curriculum goals with the best of them. Oh, I almost forgot: I am also an Executive Board Member and Director of East Coast Productions for TAFFY Presents.

WAIT! Don't go! If you reside on the West Coast, John Wood will direct you, and if you live somewhere else, we will flip a coin! Okay. Not totally true. We have local coordinators in Denver, Colorado (Katherine Dines); Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington (Beth Blenz-Clucas); Detroit, Michigan (Andrew Wood); and busy Florida (Noam Brown), plus a cast of thousands who have not committed to help us YET.

Noam Brown with Pahokee Elementary School children at the Loula V. York branch of the Palm Beach County Library System

Here is how it works: If you are a professional performer, educator, or creative person who wants to introduce children to the arts, then you should contact TAFFY. I know that there are lots of multitalented people in CMN who fall into this category. Visits are sometimes donated by the artist, but since we search for grants and donations, we *might force you to take money!* The

benefits of helping our children feel like children and seeing them smile and glow is extremely rewarding. You can make a difference!

Natalia Malley, a TAFFY artist, wrote this on Facebook:

> Last week, just before Christmas, I had the pleasure of painting for a homeless Family Shelter's Christmas party through an organization called TAFFY Presents. This non-profit organization provides opportunities to enrich the lives of underserved and hospitalized children through music, art, theatre and dance. I cannot begin to tell you what an AMAZING feeling it was to put smiles on the faces of these children! My heart truly grew three sizes that day. When these kids looked in the mirror, they saw themselves as beautiful princesses, as superheroes, as powerful dragons. I am so incredibly grateful to have been able to bring joy to these kids who are living a hard, hard life.

Natalia Malley creating face paintings at the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter in Fairfax, VA

The children served by TAFFY Presents lead hard lives because they are:

1. In hospitals due to serious medical issues;
2. Living in shelters because of homelessness and/or abuse; or
3. Attending a special school that helps them with their severe physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities.

When you become a TAFFY artist, and we find your forte, TAFFY makes a match between you and the perfect location. We work with the venue to address site concerns so that your visit runs smoothly.

Being a nonprofit 501(c)3 charity for more than twenty-eight years has given us credibility and gained us the respect of our twenty-plus communities in the United States. We are growing rapidly, so I have given up on counting! As a participating artist, all you have to do is go to the venue and do your magic. It is that easy.

The entire experience is great for the performing artist, children, families, and donors. Staff members also enjoy the fun entertainment! These events are posted on our Facebook site, too. EVERYBODY WINS!

Susan Shane-Linder's interactive program at the Learning Path Academy School, West Palm Beach, FL

We are a closely knit community. Performers enjoy sending us CDs and DVDs, which are forwarded to our venues. School, shelter, and hospital libraries have a collection of TAFFY moments to share with the children when we are not there.

When I asked Laura Cohen, Child Life Director at the Herman & Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai to name the most helpful programs we had sent, she focused on those directed at teens.

I think of Bruce Anderson who brought a huge smile to one of our young boys who spent so much time in the hospital while recuperating from surgery. Bruce taught him how to play the keyboard and our patient was beaming!!!! I think of Max Bent who helped another teenage boy compose a beat box song and let him perform it in front of a room full of staff and patients. This patient who also had to spend a lot of time in the hospital was so thrilled to be able to work alongside Max and to compose his own song. It was the happiest that I have ever seen him.

Then Laura continued to praise every performer we have sent over the past year.

TAFFY wants our artists to be creative and have fun. Here are examples of how we have helped performers apply their own new ideas to our programming:

Bruce Anderson teaching piano at the Herman & Walter Samuelson Children's Hospital at Sinai, Baltimore

- A storyteller, Barbara Effron, said that she would love to work with a Ronald McDonald House in the Washington, DC Metro area. We are in the process of connecting them.
- Singer-songwriter Laurie Mangold called and asked for TAFFY's help to create a carnival atmosphere at a shelter in Fairfax, Virginia. In response, we collaborated to create a TAFFY Fun Day at the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter. We filled the cafeteria with music, art activities, magic, face painting, and storytelling. Parents were encouraged to come with their children so that they could see how easily the arts can lead to a bonding experience for their family. So it really was a workshop for parents but it was disguised as a Fun Day for everyone. Again (let's say it together), **EVERYBODY WINS!**
- This past winter, TAFFY embarked on a novel community outreach project that grew out of Val Smalkin's initial visit to the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB). The Saturday songwriting workshop, funded by TAFFY and held for the benefit of MSB and MSB State Outreach students alike, was designed to help blind teens self-advocate. The thought behind the workshop was that songwriting would be a perfect way to encourage teens to express themselves. This event was planned to be a one-time event, but the results were so powerful that Val immediately sought and found TAFFY funding to return to work with the students for four additional sessions with an end goal of creating a CD to benefit the MSB and TAFFY. Val, under TAFFY's auspices, is coordinating this effort. Both songs and spoken-word pieces are envisioned for the CD, and CMN's own Dave Kinnoin has offered to put lyrics to music, as has local Baltimore songstress Sahffi Lynne.

Val Smalkin writes, "While we are still in the writing stage, the following is one student's original e-mail to me, followed by my reworking those ideas into a song structure. The student found the lyrics 'perfect' and is happy to share here. The underlying principle of this project is: *The student's interests take precedence over all others.*"

The student's original poem:

People stare, back away scared,
I try to act like the whispers don't bother me,
I take a deep breath and count to three.

Take a short walk around the neighborhood,
You pretend to be my friend just so you can look good,
I wipe away the tears, tell myself there is nothing to fear,
because my friends and family are right here.

I try to pretend the whispers don't bother me.
I take a deep breath and count to three.
People stare and back away scared.

They use me and abuse me, then throw me away.

Val Smalkin creating lyrics with students at the Maryland School for the Blind State Outreach Program, Baltimore

*©2017 Val Smalkin as agent for MSB Songwriting Workshop Students*

Val's reworked, student-directed lyrics are written below. She writes, "This has the girls' approval. The core of every idea came from their thoughts and words. Each verse has a different melody and mood."

**Not With My Eyes**
*Words and music by Maryland School for the Blind students with Valerie Leonhart Smalkin*
*©2017 Small Kin Music*

Can't see the light, but I see clearly
Nothing in sight, yet I see clearly

You want to be a hero
Pretend you are my friend.
I know you think I'm zero
Worth nothing in the end.

So I take a deep breath, count to three,
Pretend your pretense doesn't bother me.
But the truth of your lies isn't easy to hide.
I see your truth, but not with my eyes.

Some folks are scared, and
Some folks will stare and
Some will abuse me,
But you! You use me.

So I take a deep breath, count to three
And know your pretense doesn't bother me.
The truth of my life isn't easy to hide.
I see your soul, and not with my eyes.

I see you in a different light.
I see you with a different sight.
I see you and I understand.

So I take a deep breath, count to three

And know your pretense doesn't bother me.
The truth of our lives isn't easy to hide.
I see your heart, and not with my eyes.

So I take a deep breath; stand with pride;
Look at you understanding why.
You are limited by the things you see.
You don't have the gift
That was given me, that was given to me.

Maybe I'm blind
But I know clearly
Where there's no love,
I will love dearly.

There are so many more wonderful experiences that I would love to tell you about. Even better, make your own! You can be part of TAFFY Presents and find new ways to reach out and create a happy spot in the hearts and minds of the children we serve. When we channel our energies together towards developing positive and memorable experiences for tomorrow's adults…**EVERYBODY WINS!**

# Resources for Renewal

*Compiled by Brigid Finucane*

One of the pleasures of being part of the Children's Music Network is the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the free-wheeling, enlightening conversations that erupt between members, by accident or design, in person, via the listserv or by e-mail. The idea for this compilation, in fact, presented itself over a year ago, during e-mail exchanges with Ted Warmbrand. After I met Ted at the 2015 Zion gathering, we kept in touch, spinning stories, sharing philosophies, polishing lyrics, and examining the roots and backstories of songs. During one of our exchanges, I asked Ted, "What one or two resources have made an enduring impact on you as a musician/teacher/thinker/communicator and continue to inspire and sustain you?" His answer confirmed for me, yet again, that our members' knowledge and life experiences are indeed our greatest treasure—and inspired this feature. With one exception, those who were invited in this inaugural compilation are authors who contributed feature articles to *PIO!* since I assumed editorship. I hope to continue compiling and sharing responses from our membership, as renewal is integral to our spiritual and intellectual life.

Resources are organized in the order they were received to preserve exchanges that sometimes occurred between contributors. The list begins and ends with Ted Warmbrand.

**Ted Warmbrand**

For songs, I like to check into the out-of-print *Nearly Complete Woody Guthrie Songbook* (https://www.amazon.com/Nearly-Complete-Collection-Woody-Guthrie/dp/B0013GM41S). His clarity and composure inspire me, and I believe his children's songs are some of his best creations. Simple but not simplistic. And from the child's view. I'm never disappointed by collections of African American songs with their sharp lyric skill, alliteration, and rhythmic variety. They continue to amaze. From more contemporary times Guy and Candie Carawan's *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through Its Songs* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2725746-sing-for-freedom?from_search=true), the combined edition of *We Shall Overcome* and *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, floats my boat. Pete Seeger's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone? (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pZa3KtkVpQ)" offers his uncanny ability to focus a lyric, his generous spirit and sense of singable melodic and rhythmic adventure beyond what reasonable folks could expect. And I also gain strength from all the Lomax American folksong collections (http://research.culturalequity.org/home-audio.jsp).

A song that insinuates itself into your being, that wants to be sung, whose melody understands your feelings and whose words don't dominate but go hand in hand with that tune as if from one's heart, conflicted or not, is a helluva great gift to pull from the grab bag of life.

**Phil Hoose**
The most important written resource in my life has been the book *The Story of Ferdinand* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/773951.The_Story_of_Ferdinand?ac=1&from_search=true) by Munro Leaf. I first read it when I was very young. The bull's preference for stretching beneath a cork tree rather than risking his life for someone else's profit/entertainment made perfect sense when I was little. Still does. It has informed my art and work and behavior. The pen-and-ink illustrations still knock me out; I remember being so impressed by Ferdinand's musculature—that was one *cut* bull. I love his understanding mother. I love the perfectly reasonable tone of the narrative: "Well, if you were a bumblebee and a bull sat on you what would *you* do?" His sit-down strike in the arena ("He just sat and smelled") was Passive Resistance 101 for me.

**Ted Warmbrand**
I see *Ferdinand* the book was banned by Franco and burned by Hitler. Not bad!

**Nancy Schimmel**
Oh, my. I had *The Story of Ferdinand* memorized before I could read. I knew where to turn the pages so it looked like I was reading it. In my mind's eye I can still see that drawing of the bull's hind end and the bee on the clover.

I'd like to put in a word for *Step It Down: Games, Plays, Songs, and Stories from the Afro-American Heritage* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1635103.Step_It_Down?from_search=true) by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes. It's chock full of singing games, but the value, I think, lies in the explanation of the function of singing games in Southern Black culture (this can be extended to other cultures) in children's learning who they are and how they fit in the community.

Bess Lomax Hawes gave a great talk at one of the early CMN gatherings at Petaluma, and later I read her book, *Sing It Pretty: A Memoir* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2675762-sing-it-pretty?from_search=true), which I highly recommend. Bess came from a family of folklorists and took off in her own direction as singer, activist, mother. She was in on some pretty amazing stuff and describes it all with engaging humor. So that's my two out of many shelves and piles of books.

**Ted Warmbrand**
When you put out the call I can hardly stop myself from responding. I am very impressionable and found lots of inspiration wherever I could. *The Little Engine That Could* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/824204.The_Little_Engine_That_Could?from_search=true) seemed to nip at my toes (and appeared more able and committed than I). As a grown-up, I liked *The Bear That Wasn't* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/752988.The_Bear_That_Wasn_t?from_search=true). Stop me!

As a Bronx boy in the concrete jungle, I loved my record of Gene Autry cowboy songs and the promise of wide-open spaces—the opposite of a future in the garment district where my dad made a living. But then I'll never forget the great *Churkendoose* (https://www.loc.gov/programs/static/national-

recording-preservation-board/documents/CHURKENDOOSE.pdf) with Ray Bolger narrating. Does anyone remember that musical lesson in oddness and acceptance?

**Joanie Calem**
The source that influenced me more than any other is an old folk tale that I learned by the name "The Horse." I have since discovered that it has other names as well. The story's premise is that we needn't judge events as good or bad, because what often looks good can lead to bad and what looks bad often leads to good. It was told to me when I was around twenty, by a Holocaust survivor in Israel named Re'uma, a name she gave herself after the war. Her name means "look at the wonder."

The story literally changed my life and helped me be able to keep perspective about personal and world events in a way that I might not have been able to do quite so readily had I not heard the story at that point in my life. I never saw the story printed until I wrote a song using the story and went in search to see if it actually was a folktale or if Re'uma had made it up. I discovered there is a version of the story in the children's book *Zen Shorts* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/140181.Zen_Shorts?from_search=true) by Jon J. Muth and in the picture book *The Lost Horse: A Chinese Folktale* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/999843.The_Lost_Horse?ac=1&from_search=true) by Ed Young, in addition to many online retellings (http://ymaa.com/articles/stories-proverbs/blessing-in-disguise).

It is truly a concept that I think of nearly every moment of the day. I use this song regularly in my work with audiences of all ages starting from kindergarten-aged children. A recording of the song can be found here (http://joaniecalem.com/wordpress/is-it-a-good-thing-is-it-a-bad-thing/).

> **The Horse**
> *© Joanie Calem 2004*
>
> Long ago and far away lived a simple, modest man,
> He owned a great, strong stallion, the prettiest in the land.
> All his neighbors envied him, thought he must be blessed,
> But he was wise enough to know to wait and see what's next.
>
> One day that horse took off, just up and ran away.
> The only thing he owned disappeared that day.
> All his neighbors pitied him, thought he might be cursed,
> But he was wise enough to know it might be the reverse.
>
> *Chorus:*
> 'Cause sometimes a blessing is a curse in disguise
> Sometimes the curse changes right before our eyes
> Is it a good thing, is it a bad thing?
> Gotta wait and see what life will bring.
>
> Well, soon his horse came back, with a herd of wild mares
> Now his paddock was full, there were horses everywhere.
> All his neighbors envied him, thought he might be blessed,
> But he was wise enough to know to wait and see what's next.
>
> His son was a brave, young man, and wanted to tame a wild horse
> But the horse threw him off, and he broke both legs of course.
> All the neighbors pitied them, thought they might be cursed,

But they were wise enough to know it might be the reverse.

*Chorus*

The very next day, the king declared a war
All young men must go to fight, his son was just one more.
All the neighbors pitied them, thought they might be cursed,
But they were wise enough to know it might be the reverse.

Well, because of those broken legs, his son couldn't go to fight,
All that pain and agony probably saved his life.
All the neighbors envied them, thought they must be blessed,
But they were wise enough to know to wait and see what's next.

*Chorus*

**Bonnie Lockhart**
I loved *The Family of Man* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/197193.The_Family_of_Man?from_search=true)**,** the book of photos from the 1955 Museum of Modern Art exhibition by Edward Steichen. Still available from online used book sources, this collection was an object of endless curiosity and source of comfort to me as a young child. I no longer have the book, but so many of those images remain vivid to me, and I now imagine that they were incomparable lessons in empathy.

A bit later, as a teen working on a complicated sewing project for 4H, I spent many hours listening to Freedom Summer reports on Pacifica Radio (http://www.pacificaradioarchives.org/recording/bb4908a) in 1964. That's when I heard the Freedom Singers (http://www.blackpast.org/aah/sncc-freedom-singers-1962-1966). Their voices remain indelible—so fierce! So beautiful! So painful! So righteous! I was stunned. Though my family and our conservative Southern California suburban culture mostly ignored or disdained news of the Civil Rights Movement, these songs were a magnet that drew me to so much important history and music. I'm so grateful to Guy and Candie Carawan and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee for publishing these songs. I still have my precious and dilapidated fifty-year-old copy of the original collection (*Sing for Freedom* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2725746-sing-for-freedom?from_search=true), also available as a CD (http://www.folkways.si.edu/sing-for-freedom-the-story-of-the-civil-rights-movement/african-american-music-american-history-historical-song-struggle-protest/album/smithsonian)).

**Phil Hoose**
I loved that book, Bonnie. Thanks for bringing it back to attention. Brigid has raised a terrific question.

**Jackson Gillman**
In a fundraising support e-mail that I sent this past June, I pointed out what an enormous resource that CMN has been to me. I haven't missed a conference since I started attending in '93 because it is always such a bountiful weekend. After every conference and regional gathering, several more songs are added to my repertoire. I got to wondering how many that added up to and came up with about 200 songs! Many of these are integral to a score of my programs. For example, the songs in my kitbag from which I draw for my "Nature in Action, Story and Song" programs are written by over thirty CMN members. Many other shows are built around the songs of dozens

more CMN songwriters. I am enormously inspired by and indebted to the CMN community.

**Stuart Stotts**
I was raised on very little children's music. Very little music in general, actually. *The Singing Nun*, Danny Kaye, a little Pete Seeger on these old thick LPs. I never thought much about children's music either until I began singing with and for kids about thirty years ago. My image in some way of this music was sort of sappy: good songs about good things to think about in good ways to make good people. And some silly stuff, too.

Around that time, though, I discovered Shel Silverstein (http://www.shelsilverstein.com). He'd never been on my radar before. The subversive ideas and humor and cleverness and not always so good children's perspective opened up a mischievous and clear-eyed view that I am still amazed by today. I just love picking up *A Light in the Attic* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30118.A_Light_in_the_Attic?from_search=true) or *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30119.Where_the_Sidewalk_Ends?from_search=true) and reading.

Anyone wanting to create good material for children needs to immerse themself in Shel Silverstein. He's always good, funny, and speaking to deeper truths as well. I'm not in his style or vein of creativity, but I often wish I was.

**Carole Stephens**
Though I have read many books, I find that I don't retain a lot of content to apply to my work. I retain more that guides me from what I hear—a presentation, a recording, or a sharing of songs. In that respect, I would have to say that becoming a member of CMN has had the greatest impact on me as a musician, teacher, and presenter. Whether it's a workshop at a gathering or songs shared at round robins and song swaps—and the commentary that goes with them—or a discussion on the listserv, CMN has certainly been a guiding force as my "little music classes" turned into twenty-seven years of making music with children and those who care for them. Were I to start to make a list of individuals who have contributed, it would be long. *I am so lucky* that Tom Pease and Stuart Stotts relentlessly twisted my arm at an annual early childhood conference in Wisconsin to "take a look at CMN—you may like it." They were so right!

**Gari Stein**
Family memories greatly influence my work. Earliest is my mother's rocking and chanting ad nauseam, "Ah-Ah Bay-ay bee." While she and my aunt sang "Que Sera, Sera (http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=4667)," my sister and I carried on the tradition of performing it at every family event, along with "Tonight You Belong to Me (http://mentalfloss.com/article/20170/sweetest-song-ever-tonight-you-belong-me)." Visions of duets at the piano and dancing to show tunes cemented my future. And Dad, who taught me to "make 'em laugh" and the art of costuming me into a crazy, mixed-up Mordecai.

Now I'm a grandmother singing ad nauseam, marking every possible occasion, while asking conference attendees their first memory of being sung to. Many beam as they recall. A young teacher came to me, tears streaming down her cheeks. I thought, what a beautiful memory she must have. But…she had none. It never occurred to me that not everyone was sung to.

Decades pass with the essence of my life's work passing down traditional folk music and nurturing relationships. In the sprit of family and making music

together, my treasured resource, Bev Bos (http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/obituaries/article59874521.html), appears. When I am challenged, I often ask myself, what would Bev do? From Bev I learned the greatest lessons: how to be a teacher and how to honor childhood.

A sampling of Bev's books include *Before the Basics* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2141350.Before_the_Basics?from_search=true), *Together We're Better* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/856970.Together_We_re_Better?from_search=true), and *Don't Move the Muffin Tins* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/87300.Don_t_Move_the_Muffin_Tins?from_search=true). CDs are harder to find, but ferreting them out is well worth it. Many of the CDs are with Tom Hunter: *We've Been Waiting for You* (https://www.amazon.com/Weve-Been-Waiting-Michael-Leeman/dp/B00080L43E), *Memories, I'll Tell you a Story, Come On Over,* and *Hand in Hand.*

~Editor's note: Because of her close relationship with Tom Hunter, Bev Bos acted as Keynote for CMN's 2014 International Conference when Tom was posthumously honored with the Magic Penny award. Two of Tom's songs can be found in the #75, (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/issues/archive/75) the Fall 2013 issue of *PIO!:* "We've Been Waiting for You," and "May the Work We Do."

**Louise Pascale**
The resources listed below are the ones I seem to go back to time and again and also share with my students, who are primarily classroom teachers. I find these to all be accessible to those with and without musical background.

1. *Step It Down* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1635103.Step_It_Down?from_search=true) by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes
I had the privilege of taking a weeklong workshop with Bessie Jones and experienced how all of her material emphasizes cooperation and sharing. This is perfect to use with children and provides a good background of African American music. Each song or game includes instructions, background notes, lyrics, and music.

2. *For the Ancestors* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2627196-for-the-ancestors?from_search=true) (1983) by Bessie Jones. This is still available on Amazon and, I believe, is an essential partner to *Step It Down*. In *For the Ancestors*, Bessie explains much more about the history of the songs and games. One chapter in particular, "More Than Games," I use the most, because it provides vivid details about why the games were sung, and how they were done. I find myself reading from the book to capture not only Bessie's story but her words.

3. *The Thinking Ear* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6265501-the-thinking-ear?from_search=true) (1986) and *A Sound Education* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6265501-the-thinking-ear?from_search=true) (1992), both by R. Murray Schafer.

4. *Roots and Branches* (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/12605735-roots-and-branches?from_search=true) (1994) by Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ellen McCullough-Brabson, and Judith Cook Tucker. The book includes a CD and excellent notes and story behind each song. There are seven sections: Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Middle East, North America, South America.

This is an excellent resource which I find myself returning to often.

~Editor's note: An interview with Judith Cook Tucker (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/an-interview-with-judith-cook-tucker.aspx) appeared in last fall's *PIO!* as a "from the archives" feature.

5. New England Dancing Masters (http://dancingmasters.com/) books: *Down in the Valley* (https://www.dancingmasters.com/store/books-cds-dvds/down-in-the-valley) and *Jump Jim Joe* (now *Rise Sally Rise* (https://www.dancingmasters.com/store/books-cds-dvds/rise-sally-rise)) by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon. I use these two books a great deal. They both provide many great singing games for children and include a good explanation of the game as well as notation and lyrics.

**Lisa Garrison**
Pocket songbooks. These 3-3/4" by 6-3/4" paperback booklets, published by Cooperative Recreation Service (https://www.jstor.org/stable/4317679?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) (CRS) from the 1930s into the 1960s, were compilations of songs from world cultures and folk traditions. Their sturdy, unfussy format suggested that singing happens everywhere—at the campfire, on the road, in the fields—and takes place at all times—in the morning, at night, before meals, during work. Pocket songbooks introduced us to languages we hadn't heard before. For ten cents a book, you could learn songs from Trinidad or prayers for peace from a pocket-sized tome that fit perfectly into the palm of your hand.

CRS collaborated with song leaders from 4-H Clubs, YMCAs, scout groups, and summer camps to custom design songbooks for youth organizations. By publishing their gathered melodies, CRS supported youth song leaders as collectors in the Lomax tradition and validated their far-flung travels in search of songs. A service organization for musicians and youth groups alike, CRS honored copyright protections and helped establish group singing as an integral, accessible part of the American recreation movement. Could CRS have helped pave a way for CMN? Almost assuredly so. And thanks to World Around Songs (http://www.worldaroundsongs.com/), many of the original pocket songbooks are still in print.

**Sally Rogers**
The work of Canadian composer and pedagogue R. Murray Schafer (https://www.musiccentre.ca/node/37315/biography) changed the way I think about sound and music. His book *The Tuning of the World* (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1445856.The_Tuning_of_the_World?ac=1&from_search=true) is loaded with all sorts of mind-bending and thought-provoking projects and ideas. Schafer coined the terms "soundscape (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/585024.The_Soundscape?ac=1&from_search=true)" and "acoustic ecology (http://www.utne.com/arts/r-murray-schafer-father-of-acoustic-ecology)." He uses graphic notation in his compositions and often uses found sounds and environmental sounds.

"Today all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying within the comprehensive dominion of music. Behold the new orchestra: the sonic universe! And the musicians: anyone and anything that sounds!" (Schafer 1993 (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/585024.The_Soundscape?ac=1&from_search=true)). His concern for the preservation of the quiet corners of our lives is worthy of a Nobel Prize. His fear is that without our conscious effort, noise pollution will overtake the quiet corners we need in

order to think clearly and relax fully. He says,

> The soundscape of the world is changing. Modern man is beginning to inhabit a world with an acoustic environment radically different from any he has hitherto known. These new sounds, which differ in quality and intensity from those of the past, have alerted many researchers to the dangers of an indiscriminate and imperialistic spread of more and larger sounds into every corner of man's life. Noise pollution is now a world problem. It would seem that the world soundscape has reached an apex of vulgarity in our time, and many experts have predicted universal deafness as the ultimate consequence unless the problem can be brought quickly under control (Schafer 1993 (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/585024.The_Soundscape?ac=1&from_search=true))

I take his teaching into my classroom, even with the smallest learners who can graphically notate a sound composition and can create instruments out of anything that makes sound. And he also has reinforced for me our innate need for silence in our lives. Our students need to discover what it is to be truly quiet so they can hear their own thoughts.

**Ted Warmbrand**
How exciting to hear these responses! Am I out of bounds to find myself in search of something even most elusive, that is, the inspiration for making children's music itself?  And is it too much to expect artists to understand their own creative process? Probably. Especially for the geniuses among us. While Joanie Calem opens that window a bit with a specific example, how much more are we able to understand how these inspirations affected our work? I think of Malvina Reynolds's great song, "The Little Red Hen (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdrlT8FIATM)." Taking a tale children should know and modeling its retelling. But tell me, how close can we come to understanding our aesthetics as well as our intentions? Our musical and lyric vocabulary? My influences range from hearing my parents sing around the house to Hebrew School choir, to public school exposure to Gilbert and Sullivan and *MAD* (http://www.madmagazine.com-sub.info/Mad/Welcome) magazine parodies. There were union songs in summer camp, the Weavers (https://www.britannica.com/topic/the-Weavers-American-singing-group) albums and their invitation to explore traditional folk music from peoples all over the planet. The classical music of European masters from centuries past had their roles, as did the Broadway musical, the "vanilla" tunes of the 1950s and the "chocolate" grit that infused it as time went on. It still may be our greatest gift to face and embrace our limitations, for therein is our unique and personal style. And from that others learn who we are. And hopefully helps them know who they are. Who could ask for anything more?

# The Gift of Your Honest Self

## An Interview with Fred Rogers

*by Phil Hoose (http://www.phillihoose.com)*

During the minute or so that I am on hold, waiting for Fred Rogers (http://www.fredrogers.org/fred-rogers/bio/) to pick up the phone, I grow increasingly tense. The next voice I hear will belong to a man whose sweater is in the Smithsonian, along with the Spirit of St. Louis and pterodactyl skeletons and Archie Bunker's chair. He is one of the most identifiable figures in American life. When he finally does answer, how many other callers will be on hold as I scramble for whatever I can get of his time?

And then the voice arrives and instantly everything is all right. It is a slow voice, offered with modulation and care. There are spaces between words and bigger spaces between sentences. The words themselves are simple. Time slows by the syllable. Fred Rogers speaks to me as he has spoken to my daughters and as he speaks to millions of children in homes and day care centers each morning, and with the same effect. I am certain that there is no one on earth with whom he would rather be talking. I am special. I am good. I am a Neighbor.

The interview becomes a conversation. I ask him a question and sometimes there is no answer at all for a while.

After it comes, often he wants to know what I think. "Is that the way it is for you?" he asks. "Do you agree?" he wonders. Assistants may be slipping him notes from all directions, but I sense that he really wants to know. If I offer a thought or an insight, he takes time to consider what I've said and finds ways to affirm something about it. The same care and humanity, the same basic regard for a person's worth, comes through the phone as comes through the screen. He is what he is. When one is with Fred Rogers in any medium, the message is clear: Together, as safely and calmly as possible, we're all in the Neighborhood.

Fred McFeely Rogers was born in 1928 in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. His family was involved in banking and manufacturing. He has one adopted sister, eleven years younger than he. Fred went to high school in Latrobe, then majored in music composition at Rollins College in Florida. After graduation in 1951, he was hired by NBC in New York and became a part of some of the most important and exciting programs in the early history of television, including *The Voice of Firestone*, *The Lucky Strike Hit Parade*, *The Kate Smith Hour*, and *The NBC Opera Theatre*.

In November of 1953 Fred moved to Pittsburgh to develop program schedules for WQED, the nation's first community-supported public television station. One of the programs he developed and produced was called *The Children's Corner*. It was a live, hour-long visit with Fred's puppets and host Josie Carey. Several later-to-be Neighborhood regulars were born on that show, including puppets Daniel Striped Tiger and King Friday XIII. During the seven years of *The Children's Corner* Fred began to study childhood development and also to attend the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1962.

In 1963, Fred created a series called *Mister Rogers* for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. For the first time, he appeared on camera as the series host, and it was the precursor to the format he developed for *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, first distributed through PBS in 1968. Today, the program reaches more than seven million families each week and there are more than 600 episodes in the series. *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* is the longest-running children's program on public television. Fred Rogers has won nearly every children's television programming award available, including Emmys as a performer and as a writer.

According to *Neighborhood's* press kit, the most important goal of the series is to "Encourage children to feel good about themselves." Often, he tells his young viewers that "You are the only person like you in the whole world," and "people can like you just because you're you." During an episode viewers visit both the "television house," in which Mr. Rogers talks with young viewers, shows them things of interest, and escorts them to places where everyday things are made or done; and the "Neighborhood of Make Believe," a mostly puppet kingdom in which Mr. Rogers never appears. It is a deliberate separation, intended to help children realize the difference between reality and fantasy.

It has always been a musical neighborhood. Fred Rogers has written over 200 songs for children as well as thirteen musical stories. Often, segments are accompanied by the elegant piano of Johnny Costa (http://www.johnnycosta.com/mister-rogers-neighborhood/), a nationally known jazz pianist.

This interview took place by phone from Fred Rogers' office in Pittsburgh. Fred discusses the challenge of maintaining an island of calm in a rapidly accelerating and often violent television environment. He talks about the role of music in his work and about his early life with music.

Fred lives with his wife in the Pittsburgh area. They are the parents of two married sons and are the grandparents of boys who were born in 1988 and 1993.

**Phil Hoose: What are your early memories of music?**

Fred Rogers: One of the first is of my grandfather McFeely. We named Mr. McFeely, the speedy delivery person, after him. He loved to play the fiddle. I'll never forget the time I was able to accompany him on piano. His favorite song was "Play, Gypsy, Dance Gypsy, Play While You May" (sings it). I played the piano at his house and he played the fiddle. And to think that I am a

grandfather now, and I have two grandchildren, six years old and two years old. The other night the two-year-old patted the piano bench, which meant that he wanted me to sit there and play. And when I play, I wish you could see him dance! He takes one foot and puts it down and sways and puts the other one down and sways back and forth. He's very musical, I think.

**Did your parents sing to you when you were little?**

I have a feeling that they did. They always told me stories about my listening to the radio and then I would either hum what I heard, or, after my grandmother McFeely bought me a piano, I would go to the piano and pick out the tunes that I had heard. So radio and books meant a lot to me too. There wasn't such a thing as television then. They remember taking me to movies when I was five or six. Then I would come home and play the songs from the movie. I always played by ear. I wanted to learn to play the organ, so my grandmother got me a Hammond organ. Evidently, when I was about ten, they put the speaker out on the porch on Christmas Eve, and I would play Christmas carols, and people would drive up and down the street and listen to the music.

**By then you could harmonize your notes into chords?**

Oh, sure. It took me a long time before I really learned to read notes well because it came so easily by ear. Do you play by ear?

**Yes, I haven't learned to read [notes] yet. It seems hard. I've taken some swings at it but I haven't really learned. What gave you the sensitivity, the empathy that you have with children? What gave you the desire to help them feel strong and powerful?**

Maybe being an only child for eleven years. Your antennae go out pretty far in trying to sense how other people are feeling. My sister didn't come along until I was eleven. I don't know; I'm sure some of it is biological. My parents were very much concerned about others. They were very active in their church. Both Mother and Dad were elders in the first Presbyterian Church of Latrobe for many years. I remember during the Second World War, my mother was in charge of the whole area's volunteer surgical dressing department. I understand that in World War I she helped make sweaters for soldiers. She was a great sweater maker. She made all my sweaters.

**Including the famous one?**

Yeah. Every month she would make a sweater. So at Christmas time, twelve of us in our extended family got a sweater each year that was made by Nancy Rogers. Every year we would open these boxes and here would be this wonderful sweater, and Mother would say, "Now what kind does everybody want next year?" She had all these patterns, you know. She'd say, "I know what kind you want, Freddy. You want the one with the zipper up the front." And that's what she made. The one that's in the Smithsonian (http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-indelible-mister-rogers-136524510/) is one that she had made.

**"Every year we would open these boxes and here would be this wonderful sweater, and mother would say, 'Now what kind does everybody want next year?' … She'd say, 'I know what kind you want, Freddy. You want the one with the zipper up the front.' And that's what she made."**

**How did you land in the fast lane in New York in the early days of television?**

Well, I had just gotten a music degree from Rollins College. I was a composition major. When I decided I wanted to do television and got a job at NBC in New York, they noticed I had a degree in music so they assigned me to various music programs. What a wonderful experience that was! *The Hit Parade, The Kate Smith Hour*, *The Voice of Firestone, The NBC Opera Theater*...those were all programs that I was intimately associated with.

**What did you do on a show like *The Lucky Strike Hit Parade*?**

I was a floor manager. Now, that was a huge program. We had five floor managers. I had earphones on, and I was connected to the television director who was in a booth. And the director was telling me what is coming up next and to get it ready. Then you ask the stagehands to move things and get them prepared for the next scene. And you also ask the talent to get into place and you tell them how long they have until the next scene is about to start. I remember Snooky Lanson, one of the stars, so well. Do you know who I mean?

**No.**

He was one of the stars. There was Dorothy Collins, and June Valley, and Russell Arms, and Snooky Lanson. They were the stars during my two years. Anyway, Mr. Lanson loved to play craps backstage with the stagehands. I'd go back there and say (whispers) "Mr. Lanson, you're ON in two minutes." He'd say, "Be right there, Freddy." And so he'd come out and get in place and it was as if he'd been right there all evening. It was just amazing what could be done in the days of live television. We started rehearsing early in the morning and by nine o'clock at night it was ready to go on the air. *The NBC Opera Theater* was what I really loved. We did the first *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. It was commissioned for that program. I remember Toscanini coming to the dress rehearsal, and after he just hugged Gian Carlo Menotti [the composer] and said in Italian, "It's the best you've ever done!" Here I was. How did I know I was right in the middle of history being made?

**Did you have any sense of that?**

No. In fact, I would go home and tell JoAnne—we were married when I was in New York, in the second of those two years—I didn't know anything about famous people, except Menotti. I remember one day saying, "Oh, Sarah"—I usually call her Sarah—"there was this WONDERFUL singer. She really is going to go far. Her name is Peggy Lee." Sarah said, "Fred, she already has gone far." But these were people I was floor managing. I was hearing wonderful music.

**Did you, as a musician yourself, want to write pop songs in those days?**

Oh, yes. In fact, I'd think, "Here you are, right in Tin Pan Alley, and you're managing other people's music." Once when I was in college some people I knew got me introduced to Jack Lawrence. He was one of the biggest songwriters in New York. He wrote *If I Didn't Care* and a lot of other songs. He was like Irving Berlin, that big. I went to visit him when I was a freshman. And I had five songs. I went to his brownstone. He was very welcoming. He asked me to play my songs, and I did. He listened, and he said, "Those songs have a lot of promise, Fred. How many more do you have?" I said, "A few." He said, "Well, to me a few means three, so that makes eight. I'd like you to come back when you have a barrel full." I was crestfallen. I was sure my five songs would end up on Broadway. But that was some of the best advice I ever got.

**It seems contrary to what you hear now. Everyone says, "Only bring a publisher or an agent your best song" or "only bring a few."**

> "Don't ever think of any one composition as so precious that it has to define you."

I can understand that if you have already written your barrel full. He was telling me to write, write, write. It was excellent advice. The more I wrote the more I saw the possibility of writing. I don't know that I would ever have written these little operas for the *Neighborhood* if I hadn't gotten that advice then. In other words, "Don't ever think of any one composition as so precious that it has to define you."

**So did you ever go back with your barrel full?**

I did, when I was already doing my *Neighborhood* programs. He had heard them on television.

**Have you ever formally studied the role of music in child development, or what characteristics of songs seem to appeal to children?**

> "I think one of the greatest gifts you can give anybody is the gift of your honest self."

I used to take my puppets to the center where I did my practicum work in child development. I would show the children the puppets and talk for them and play music for them to dance or move to, or to make up words to. I rarely played ordinary nursery rhyme songs. I loved in front of them what I loved to do; that is, to make the puppets talk and play the piano. I think one of the greatest gifts you can give anybody is the gift of your honest self. The woman who was the director of that nursery school told me that she had never seen the children use puppets, and there were puppets all around. She said they used them imaginatively when I would come with my puppets. She made an analogy to a father of one of the children several years before. He was a sculptor. He would come to the school once a week just to fashion clay in the midst of the children, not to teach sculpting, but to show how you enjoy it in front of the children. He would come and love that clay in front of the children one day a week. She said that never before or since had the children used clay so imaginatively as when that man used to come and love it in front of them. Nothing didactic about it.

**Just loving what you love in front of them...**

Yes. They will catch your enthusiasm. Attitudes are caught, they're not taught.

**As you say that, I think about what I love to do, and whether that's my experience. It's almost Zen-like. With music, if I'm singing a song or making one up with children, if I become too conscious of the process or the time, it's distracting and we lose each other. I think tension is caught as well. But I think when I'm having fun, they're having fun. We're all having fun.**

So you caught my notion...

**Why is music so important to your neighborhood?**

Because it's essential to me. Doing puppets or playing the piano or making up songs isn't for everybody, but it's like drinking water or breathing fresh air for me. And *Neighborhood* would certainly be different if I weren't in it. And it would be fake if it didn't have a large musical component.

**One of the things I love about your music is the jazz piano. Is it improvised?**

I write the songs, and then Johnny Costa, a magnificent jazz pianist, improvises much of the music around them.

> “Doing puppets or playing the piano or making up songs isn’t for everybody, but it’s like drinking water or breathing fresh air for me.”

**You use opera in your neighborhood. I’ve never heard that in children’s entertainment except maybe with *Mighty Mouse*** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb5ou1iS9JE).

I’ve written about thirteen operas of about twenty minutes each. *The Grandparent’s Opera* was one of them.

**Do you keep up with children’s music? Are you aware of the artists that are out there now?**

I do not. I just give to children what I find within me. I don’t watch much television at all, either. I’m a reader. We haven’t used television well at all in this world. It’s a perfectly wonderful medium. There have been times when it’s been used beautifully. But it’s been so misused that it bothers me.

**Life and TV are noisier and more action oriented now than when you started working. Has this affected your show?**

> “We’re still one of the islands that encourage quiet and some space to think.”

We’re still one of the islands that encourage quiet and some space to think. We hear every day from people saying how grateful they are for some time of calm. Now, I think people should have complete silence every day.

I just get so annoyed when I’m out somewhere and I can’t close my ears the way I can close my eyes. We’re bombarded from every direction. Who says that people want to hear what’s broadcast in public?

**I know what you mean. Our children do watch TV. We regulate how much and what they can see, but we let them watch. Our younger daughter, who is almost five, feels a lot of pressure at school to react to the *Power Rangers* and other faster, noisier shows.**

I agree. My grandson has been sucked into that too. He watches the *Power Rangers*. But he still watches the *Neighborhood*. I just lament the fact that children watch so much. Too much. They need time to play.

**Has all of this affected either how many children watch the *Neighborhood* or the age at which they leave you?**

We used to think that the target age was five or six, and that we might have some four-year-olds and seven-year-olds. Now we’re hearing that the children are starting to watch at eighteen months. The high point is about three. It’s ridiculous. What’s that doing to their psyche? I’m not concerned about what they might see on the *Neighborhood*, but I am concerned about what they might see all around it. Some children watch unmonitored and see shows meant for adults.

**What is it like to be the remaining island of calm in a rising sea? Do you ever stand up there in front of the camera and feel like you’ve got**

**to be a lot for a lot of people?**

All I can do is be myself. I've had the grace to be able to do that. I walk into the studio and I think, "Let some word that is heard be Thine." Whatever doesn't come from the eternal is just dross anyway. So I just pass on what's been given to me.

> "All I can do is be myself…. So I just pass on what's been given to me."

**Do you ever have visions as you look at the camera of the horrible situations some children are in as they look back at you?**

Oh yes. Not that I have any exact view of it, but I think about the children and some of the ones I've known in desperate straits. I've been to a lot of places, some of them very poor. I know I can't do everything, but I know I can give the kind of nourishment that comes from an understanding of the development of the human personality.

**Do you have a sense of the importance of being one of the only widely visible males that works with and cares about young children? Do you see yourself as a role model for maleness?**

I remember one time after the *Neighborhood* had been on quite a while, the people in New York asked me to come talk about doing some commercial television. One of the first questions they asked me was "What costume will you wear?" They said, "You've got to jazz up what you do." I said, "Well, it looks to me as if this meeting is over," because for all the time I've been on television all I've ever wanted to do was to give one more honest adult to the children who are watching. Covering me up with all kinds of jazzy stuff is not my idea of the expression of honesty. Does that answer your question?

**Part of it. I still want to ask about maleness. One reason many people appreciate you is that you give a child a chance to see a man on television who is not loud, or fast in his movements, or always in an action mode. To what extent is that just you, and to what extent do you see yourself as a role model?**

I think that if I were very aggressive in my movements and my speech that it would be a sham for me to try to act like Mr. Rogers. We got a letter yesterday in which someone said how grateful they were that a certain person was on television who was close to being "Mr. Rogers-esque." It seems to have become part of the culture: that a gentle, calm, quiet male can be considered "Mr. Rogers-esque." I just don't think you can fake that. I wouldn't want to advise someone who is just the opposite of me to do it just like me. It wouldn't be real. I think children and adults long to be in touch with what's real. Don't you?

**I do, and I think people "catch" realness just as they catch the love one has for the things one does.**

That's a beautiful analogy, picking up on what we talked about before.

**Has your being a minister affected the *Neighborhood*, or your work with children?**

It has helped me become who I am, and it's all a part of me. My relationship with my Creator is just part of who I am. I don't think you have to use labels to allow people to see what is your inspiration.

**You've been working with children for four decades now. Would you have any advice for those of us who are just now choosing to spend a good bit of our time and our creative energy working with children?**

(Long silence) First of all, I would think that it would be important to understand the roots of your desire to do that. As you come to understand that, then you can understand what might be in the children with whom you're communicating. With parents, for example, as a child goes through certain stages of development, that re-evokes those feelings in their parents that stem from those same stages that they went through. I think that way you get to be more gentle with yourself, and as you're able to do that, then the children that you're with sense that you're accepting of them, as you become more accepting of who you have been as a child, that child that you continue to carry along with you in life.

*Originally published in Issue #19/20, Summer 1995.*
(https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/issues/archive/19-20)

# Melanie DeMore

## Music as Community Connector and Food for the Soul

*by Lily Emerson*

*This past summer, I was lucky enough to interview Melanie DeMore (http://www.melaniedemore.com), the phenomenal keynote speaker for the recent Children's Music Network Conference in Los Gatos, California. Afterwards, I was left feeling incredibly inspired. Selections of our conversation were originally published in the CMN blog: Part One (http://blog.cmnonline.org/2016/09/13/interview-with-melanie-demore-pt-one/) and Part Two (http://blog.cmnonline.org/2016/09/13/interview-with-melanie-demore-pt-one/).*

*If you are unfamiliar with this extraordinary person, Melanie DeMore is a multitalented singer, composer, performer, choral instructor, and "vocal activist," and has been involved with a number of organizations and ongoing community actions over the last several years. The following comprises a few connected moments from the original blog posts as well as parts of our conversation that were omitted.*

**Music and Connection**

Melanie DeMore: I think the main thing that we need to remember is that music, again, not only is it food, it's the thing that ties everybody together and makes them equal. It is the one time when people are singing together and making music together; in that moment, they are together.

Because you have to do the rhythms together, your feet are doing something different than your hands, you're singing, you're doing all these other things, and when you get that many people together who are moving and doing all that stuff together, it is extremely powerful and it makes the group more cohesive. So it's really about community building, which is the entire premise of everything that I do musically; whether it's little kids or professional choirs, that is the entire purpose: the tightening of whatever community that is. Tightening the weave. It's just so important, especially these days. What are the things that tie us, that connect us to each other?

With my little kids, I would ask them, "What do you need to feel safe? Do you know that a little kid in Syria or Iraq or Ghana needs exactly the same thing?" So that when we sing these songs, like a song I wrote called "For All the Children in the World," you're getting to sing for people who maybe don't get to sing. Your song is wrapping somebody else up, so I want them to think

about that; what happens to somebody over there affects you. They're little kids, and they're like, "We get that. We understand that." It all comes back to tightening the weave of community and connection. If it doesn't do that, I ain't interested.

> **"Your job is to go and teach the song that you learned today to somebody else."**

For nine years I conducted a children's choir. I wrote mostly all-new music, and it was important to me that the music first of all reflected what was going on in the community and in the country. I also instructed them, after every rehearsal, "Your job is to go and teach the song that you learned today to somebody else." That's really important to me.

Generally, I would write really interesting music for them that was fun to sing, but that had something that they could carry out throughout their lives. You know, that they could call up. Planting seeds in there. Giving them tools for how to walk around in the world.

Oakland Children's Choir

I had a young woman who obviously had been through a lot of really hard things, and I had written a song earlier called "I Can Do That," because to be able to do anything, somebody just has to show you. I wanted to help them come from that point of view. "Yes, I can do that. Show me," instead of, "No, I can't do that," which automatically puts you down. So I used this piece a lot, and she sent me a message on Facebook a little bit after that, and she said, "You know, I decided I was going to audition for this musical, and I got really scared, and then I remembered the song, 'I can do that, I just don't know how yet,' so I'm going to do it."

You see, if you're going to pass that knowledge along, pass on something you can use. What's the point, otherwise? Because music is so powerful, and imprints on you, if you can imprint something that people can use, that's really important. That's the most important thing. I don't want to give them empty calories.

**Lily Emerson: Is that where your Sound Awareness program came from?**

Sound Awareness is just a blanket. It's an umbrella term for a bunch of different classes under what I call Sound Awareness. So, for instance, under my umbrella of Sound Awareness, I developed a whole curriculum based on *American Idol*.

Because one year when I was at St Paul's [Episcopal School] in Oakland, one of the top four was a kid I'd trained for the Oakland Youth Chorus. The top four, here in Oakland! So the kids were really into it, and I thought, "Well, okay, let me just think about this," since I knew they were watching it.

The kids kept a journal, and I talked with the other teachers, because it wasn't just about the music. They had to look at demographics. They had to keep track of what was the top news story each week. We talked about different statistical things, about how over the years in *American Idol*—most people don't even realize this—most of the winners are from the South, so we talked about those kind of things. We had a whole list of vocabulary words that go along with pop culture, and one of their vocabulary words was "arbitrary,"

because nothing is arbitrary. Everything you see on TV is absolutely coordinated.

One year, doing this with the kids, I said, "Hey, let's look at our commercials, and see..." because they had to keep good track of the commercials. And they'd say, "Oh, they don't mean anything," and I'd say, "I want you to keep track of them." And so we're looking at the commercials, and I said, "What's different than when we looked at these a couple weeks ago?" And you know how sixth graders are, they'll give you 60 million different answers before they land on the one, and finally one of them said, "Oh yeah, Ms. DeMore. There were more commercials for the military." "Huh, isn't that interesting?" And they said "Yeah. They're just commercials." And I said "What is the top news story this week in the country?" And all of the sudden someone said, "Oh yeah! They need more soldiers!" And I said, "Hmm…isn't that interesting? Why do you think there would be more commercials for the military on *American Idol*?" They said, "Oh, they're just commercials." And I said, "Let's go back. What is the average age of people who watch *American Idol*?" And the kids were like, "Huh?" "Isn't that interesting?" This was the week after the war in Iraq began.

That's why I wanted them to look and keep a journal, because it has everything to do with music, but also feels like the pulse of what was going on in our country. Also, it's all kinds of things having to do with democracy, because you vote on *American Idol*. I said to them, "So, is this, in our terms of democracy and our rules (one person, one vote), is *American Idol* really based on the premise of democracy?" They said, "Sure, you get to vote!" and I said, "But don't you get to vote as many times as you want to? You can vote ten times on the computer, ten times by phone, ten times by text." I said, "Is that really democracy?"

And then I would throw them another question, and say, "If they give you a list of 500 songs and say 'You can pick any song you want to,' is that freedom of choice?" and they'd go, "Yeah, you get to pick any song you want to." I'd say, "Let me ask you again. If they give you a list of 500 songs and say you can pick anything you want, is that freedom of choice?" And after a while, the kids are like, "Well, I guess if they write the list, then maybe they've already picked the things for you. You're just picking whatever is approved by them to pick." I said, "BINGO."

**It sounds like a combination of critical thinking and awareness about how music is used in media.**

Exactly. It's completely about critical thinking. There's a whole other course under Sound Awareness where students have to bring in the lyrics of their favorite song. They have to write it in their own handwriting. And that's to talk to them about how music is imprinted on them, before they understand what it really means. If they have to sit down and write it, it makes them think more about what it is that they're writing, so that they begin to look at what it is. I'll say, "You have to give me three reasons why you like it, and 'it's got a great beat' and 'just because' are not reasons! Here's the piece of music that you really love. Does that represent who you are when you walk into the room? And how are you affected by the music that you listen to?" And a lot of them say, "I'm not affected by any of that, I'm not affected by any commercials or music videos," And I say, "Oh, I'm looking at you and you are nothing but wearing designer labels all the time." I said, "You've got to think about this."

So this is the kind of stuff we talk about. About being awake, and being aware of how the music and the words affect you. If you're not awake, you don't understand how you are being manipulated—as to what to buy, what to wear, how to speak, how to interact with your friends, you know. So to me, that's all under sound awareness.

**That seems like a pretty essential thing to be teaching kids, particularly at the sixth grade level, since it's a time when you're trying to define yourself by what you're wearing and how you can fit in, and becoming aware as to how manipulated you are by the media.**

Right?

**On the connection between audience and performer, and putting yourself into what you're singing:**

I was working with a choir, and these people were rigid. I said, "You've got to put more of yourself into the piece." They said, "But we're doing Bach's B-Minor Mass." And I said, "Can I remind you that Bach had twenty children? Okay?" [laughter]

> **"I was working with a choir, and these people were rigid. I said, 'You've got to put more of yourself into the piece.' They said, 'But we're doing Bach's B-Minor Mass.' And I said, 'Can I remind you that Bach had twenty children?'"**

You have to realize that a human being wrote this. I had a choir say, "We don't want to get in the way of the music." "What? Then I'm going to sit by my radio at home in my drawers and eat my popcorn!" They call it a live performance for a reason. There should be this exchange, otherwise it's two-dimensional and who cares?

**You have made me very, very happy to know that you are in the world. This is what we need more of right here.**

It's good for you to discover why you have been given the gifts that you have been given. And we are here to manifest those gifts in a way that connects people. That's why. And folks know. They know when it's the truth and when it's not.

**You can feel it.**

Melanie with one of her heroes, Pete Seeger

They know! And I work with a group. I do a lot of live singing for dance companies as well. But I've been working with this group and talking about the combination of theatre and dance and music—you'll love this—it's called Skywatchers (http://www.abdproductions.org/skywatchers-2-2/), in San Francisco, a spontaneous choir and open mic. Skywatchers is in the Tenderloin, which is the rough section of San Francisco. It's in the Tenderloin National Forest, which used to be an old crack alley, and now is the heart of the Tenderloin; you open up these gates and there's this beautiful thing. It's with the residents there. All of the stories are their stories. It's incredible, and it's theatre, it's dance. We lead a procession through the neighborhood. Folks who are nodding off on the sidewalk lift their heads up and start singing. But that's the thing about that connection and community and giving people a voice when they think that no one gives a shit about who they are or what they have to say or that they even have a voice! That's what

Skywatchers is all about. So you'll wanna check that out.

**I'll go on a YouTube binge.**
*(I did. Highly recommended.)*

**I'm really appreciative of this conversation, and very glad that you are doing the work that you are doing. THANK YOU.**

Well, I really am glad that you're doing what you're doing, too.

*At that point, we wrapped things up. I felt more inspired and sure of my path than I had in ages. The world is a better place because Melanie DeMore is in it. But more than that, it's a better place because the Children's Music Network, all of its inspiring members, and the world of children's music exists.*

*Now more than ever, we need people who are focused on connecting communities, planting the seeds of song, and helping young people cultivate the tools they'll need as they traverse the world, so that they can grow into leaders, connectors, healers, music makers, and whatever else the future requires. We need all of our collective gifts to help guide the world through this difficult time. I don't know exactly how I'll be adding to that, but I know I have to, somehow. As Melanie's song goes, "I can do that, I just don't know how yet. Show me how…."*

# Sock Talk!

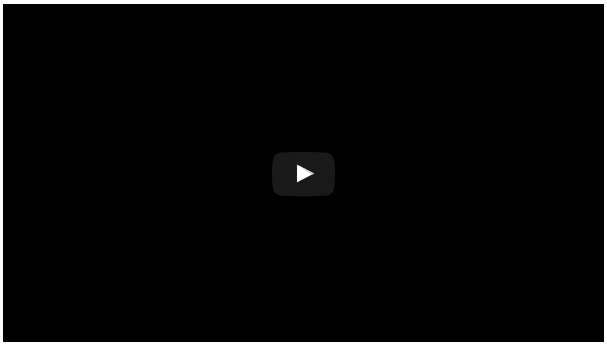
*by Valerie Leonhart Smalkin*

Socks talk? Of course they do, whether or not you move your lips! If you've never seen Joshua Holden's *The Joshua Show* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypa8nKGv9JI), click on the link and take a few minutes to see what can be done with a simple sock. There is no right or wrong way…just you and your sock and your creativity.

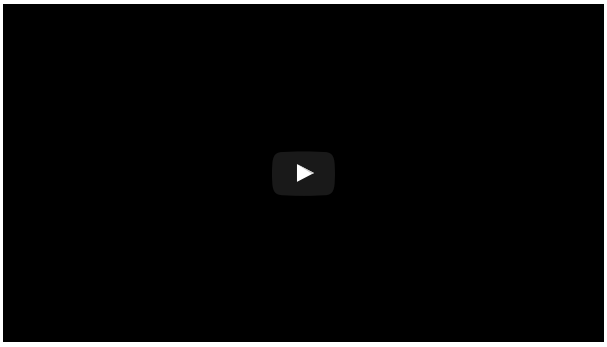
At the Children's Music Network 2016 Annual Conference in Los Gatos, California, my sock puppet–making workshop participants went crazy with their sock creations! I do not think I'll ever forget twelve or so socks breaking out into an impromptu version of "The Sound of Music." I didn't catch it on video, so use your imagination. But here is the sock rendition of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea8DvuxOojA&feature=youtu.be)

If you want a refresher on sock puppetry, or need a starting place, this article is for you.

I suggest starting with colorful, bright socks (https://www.dollardays.com/wholesale-knee-high-socks.html). But you can see from *The Joshua Show* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypa8nKGv9JI) what can be done with an old, dirty, white gym sock! Anyway, you need a mouth, right? I will show you MY way of forming a mouth from a sock, but it's not the only way for sure. The following video shows how to make a sock puppet without scissors or hot glue. This is perfect for preschool and kindergarten, but they will still need your help!



Sock Talk with Val Smalkin



Sock Talk II

How you work your puppet depends upon your goals. If you goal is to spur creativity in your students, then I say there should be no rules, just free experimentation. Nothing stifles creativity more than the teacher saying, "You're not holding that right." Left to their own children will invent many fabulous ways to hold, work, or play with a sock puppet. I always learn from them.

If you goal is to present a show, then you will want

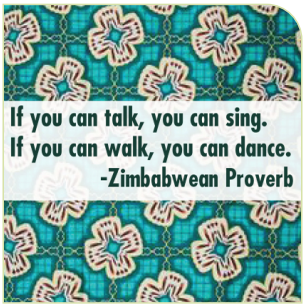
to consider what the puppet looks like from the audience's point of view. Another video will explain better than words.

You'll notice I got off topic in that video by teaching another way to make a great sock puppet for younger children that involves a little bit of sewing and googly eyes. Use a stretch stitch if you use this second style of sock puppet. The photos below will provide a closer look at the process.

PLEASE KNOW: Peepers, the googly eyes invented by the fabulous puppeteer Hobey Ford (http://loydartists.com/roster/f/c/32/) are available at http://www.peeperspuppet.com (http://www.peeperspuppet.com) along with lots of videos for how to use them!

Happy Sock Puppet Making and Talking!

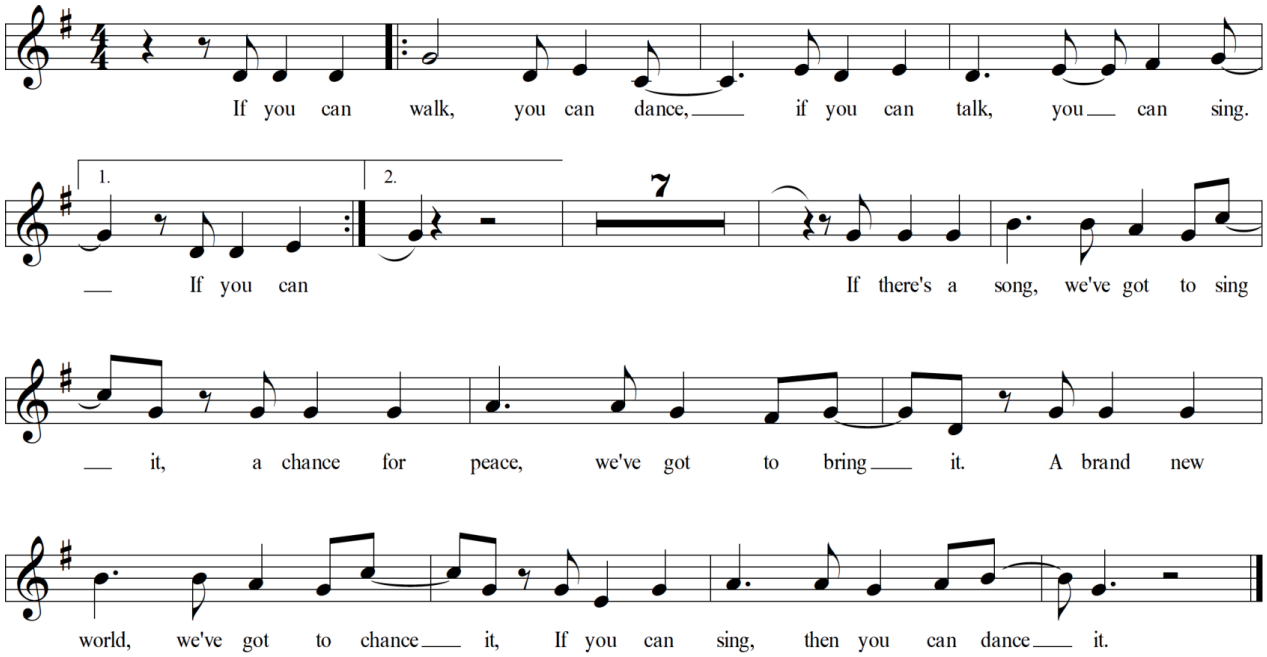
# You Can Dance



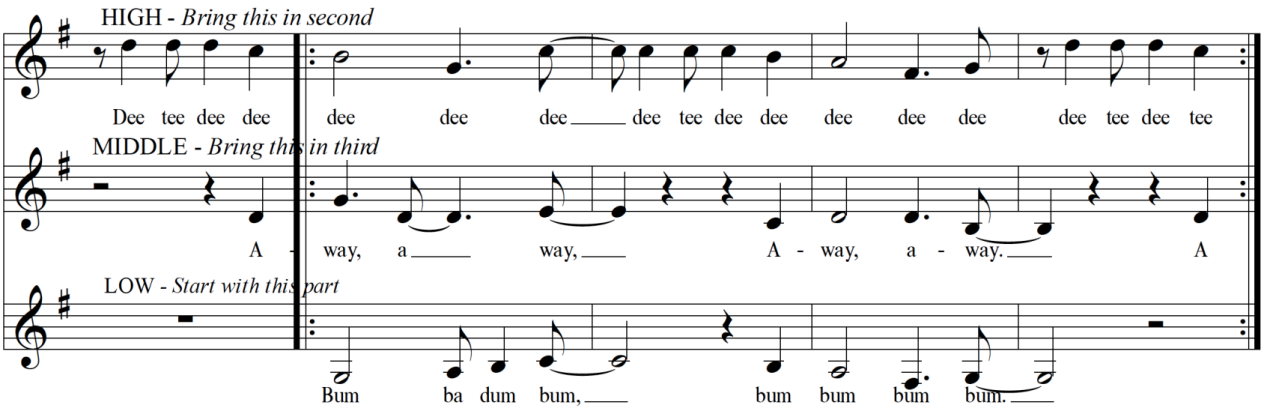

*Based on a proverb from Zimbabwe*
*Words and music by Lisa Atkinson*
*© 1991 Loose Gravel Music*

00:00 02:07

For those who never met Lisa Atkinson, a review of the memories saved on the CMN listserv provides a sense of her impact on the community. A deep respect for Lisa's superb and moving songwriting abilities is the most common thread, followed by references to her energetic spirit. One person wonders, "How God could squeeze so much power and energy into such a petite frame?" There are numerous mentions of her loving and nurturing nature, followed by her humor, wit, and joy.

The purpose of *PIO!* is met fully in honoring Lisa's song as this issue's CMN anthem. We will pass on the songs; we will pass on the memories; we will pass on Lisa's spirit.

If you can walk, you can dance, if you can talk, you can sing.
1.
2.
7
If you can
If there's a song, we've got to sing
it, a chance for peace, we've got to bring it. A brand new
world, we've got to chance it, If you can sing, then you can dance it.

Harmony Parts


HIGH - Bring this in second
Dee tee dee dee dee dee dee dee tee dee dee dee dee dee dee tee dee tee
MIDDLE - Bring this in third
A way, a way, A way, a way. A
LOW - Start with this part
Bum ba dum bum, bum bum bum bum.

If you can walk, you can dance,
If you can talk, you can sing.
If there's a song, we've got to sing it,
A chance for peace, we've got to bring it.
A brand new world, we've got to chance it,
If you can sing, then you can dance it.

Lisa explained how she taught the song to groups: "I start with the bass line. When that's established, add your angels (that's the high part). I use my fists to help get this rhythm across. People tend to hesitate on the first three notes and if it drags, you lose your beat. As I bring in the third part (away, away), I tell them, 'Just keep singing till you see my hands come up and tell you to stop.' When the room is going strong, I bring in the lead vocal. I sing it twice with a bit of improvisation between the verses."

A special thank you to George Kincheloe, Lisa's husband, for sharing Lisa's music once again.

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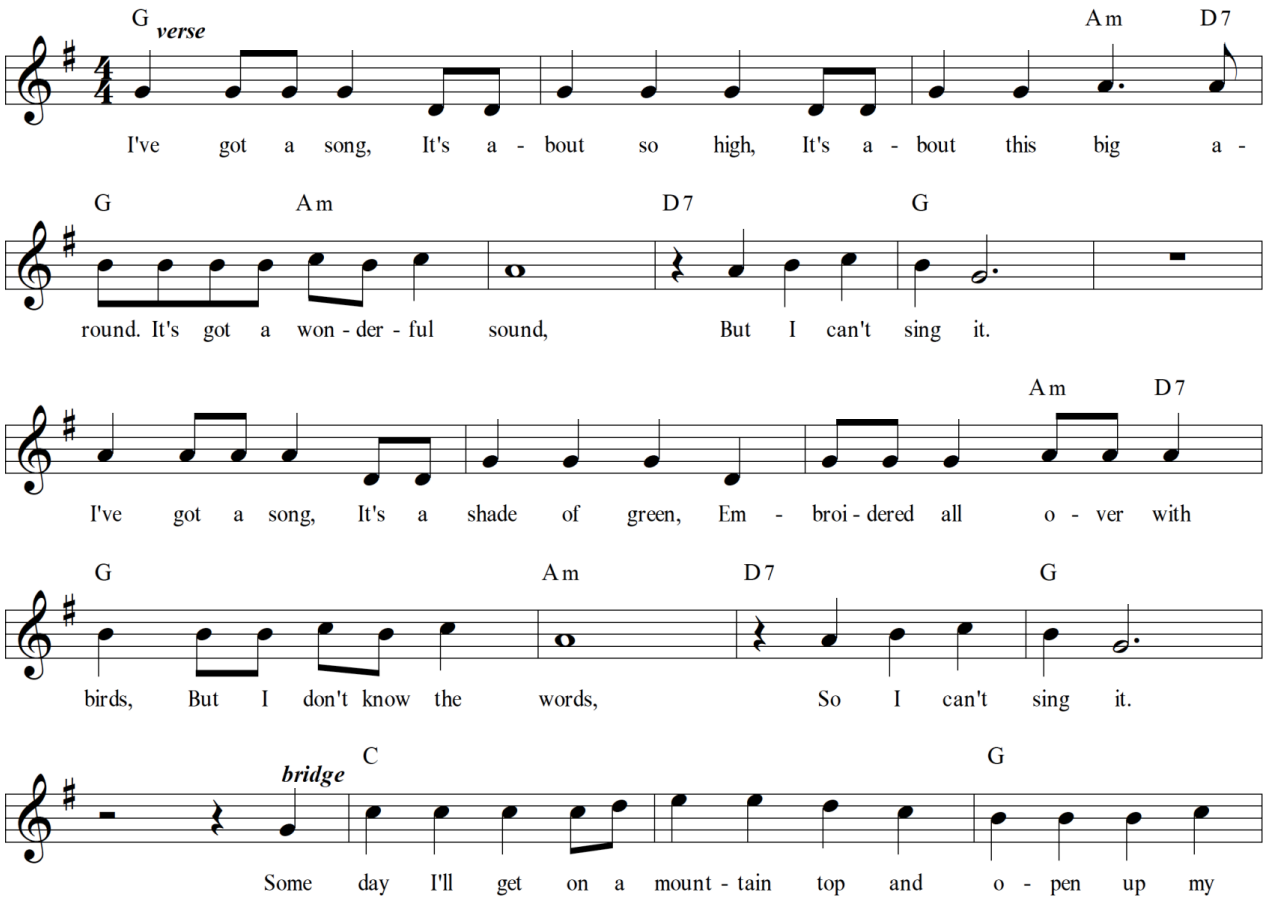
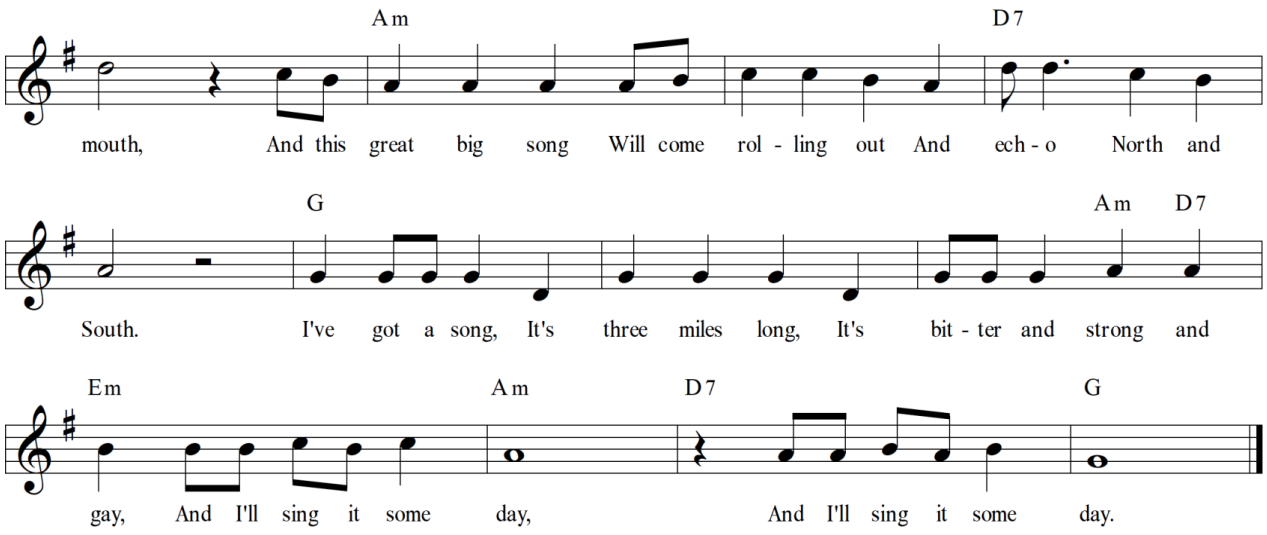
# I've Got a Song

*Words and music by Malvina Reynolds*
*© 1965 Schroder Music Company, renewed 1993*

00:00 01:35

Malvina Reynolds wrote the perfect situational song time and time again. With an uncanny accuracy, Malvina captured in this song the mindset of a young child trying to remember what he or she was going to say. Nancy Schimmel tells this story about how her mother wrote "I've Got a Song."

"Malvina and her husband were visiting Lou Gottlieb and his wife one day. He was the humorist of the Limeliters and was a witty but lengthy talker off stage, too. The talk that day was of music, as it often was. Lou's little girl, Judy, was lingering around the outside of the grown-up circle, trying to get a word in. She said, 'I've got a song!' Malvina asked, 'Would you sing it for us?' Judy hesitated, then said, 'I forgot.' Malvina went home and wrote this song, which was first published as 'Judy's Song.'"

G verse Am D7
I've got a song, It's a - bout so high, It's a - bout this big a -
G Am D7 G
round. It's got a won - der - ful sound, But I can't sing it.
Am D7
I've got a song, It's a shade of green, Em - broi - dered all o - ver with
G Am D7 G
birds, But I don't know the words, So I can't sing it.
bridge C G
Some day I'll get on a mount - tain top and o - pen up my


Am
D7
mouth, And this great big song Will come rol - ling out And ech - o North and
G
Am D7
South. I've got a song, It's three miles long, It's bit - ter and strong and
Em
Am
D7
G
gay, And I'll sing it some day, And I'll sing it some day.

I've got a song,
It's about so high,
It's about this big around.
It's got a wonderful sound,
But I can't sing it.

I've got a song,
It's a shade of green,
Embroidered all over with birds,
But I don't know the words,
So I can't sing it.

*Bridge:*
Someday I'll get on a mountain top
And open up my mouth,
And this great big song
Will come rolling out
And echo North and South.

I've got a song,
It's three miles long,
It's bitter and strong and gay,
And I'll sing it someday,
And I'll sing it someday.

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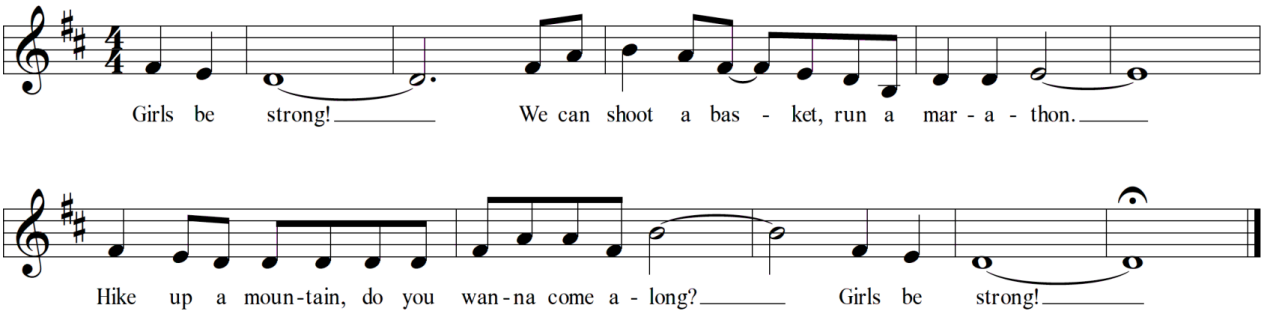
# Girls Be Strong

*Words and music by Betsy Rose*
*© 2014 Betsy Rose*

00:00 01:50

"'Girls Be Strong' was inspired by my own decision to spread my wings and live out a long-awaited dream of international musical travel. I took this song around the world, teaching it to girls in Thailand, India, Nepal, Kenya, and Liberia. Some of the language in my version is culturally specific to the United States, and I wanted verses that reflected *their* worlds. I guided them in writing their own verses (sometimes in their own language) expressing their sense of possibility and power. I also interviewed boys and include their words of support and encouragement for girls. Back home, with the help of a college media studies intern, I edited it down to a collage of girls' voices and verses, and boys' messages. I'd love your ideas and contacts for girls' organizations and projects around the world who might like to have this as a resource or linked on their websites. Please enjoy and share this video of children singing."

Girls be strong!
We can shoot a basket, run a marathon.
Hike up a mountain, do you wanna come along?
Girls be strong!

Girls be smart,
At chemistry, poetry, math, and art.
Good with our minds, good with our hearts!
Girls be smart!

Girls stand tall!
Stand up for ourselves, stand up for you all.
Help each other when we take a fall.
Girls stand tall!

Girls can cry!

*International Girls Original Verses*

Girls have dreams!
We can share our talent like a shining beam.
We can make a difference 'cause we're all a team.
Girls have dreams!
*(Shushila Arts Center, Kathmandu, Nepal)*

Girls are brave!
We've got a lot to do, got a world to save.
We know we can do it, that's how we're made!
Girls are brave!
*(Fairyland School, Kathmandu, Nepal)*

Girls won't quit!
We'll be nurses, singers, we'll be president!

Don’t have to bottle it up inside.
We can laugh so hard it’ll split the sky.
Girls can cry!

Girls can fly!
Got the wind and the wings and an open sky.
Don’t know what you can do ‘til you give it a try!
Girls can fly!

Girls be strong!
If you know what I mean you can sing along.
Girls be making up a brand-new song!
Girls be strong!

Business woman, surgeon, pastor, and friend!
Girls won’t quit!
*(Totota Village, Liberia)*

Girls unite!
We will come together, we will bring the light.
Our dreams are not beyond our sight.
Girls unite!
*(St Frances School for Girls, Naivasha, Kenya)*

Women lead!
Fighters, leaders, we’re a masterpiece!
We have different rhythms but a single beat.
Women lead!
*(Women Lead Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal)*

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# El Juego Chirimbolo

El juego chirimbolo que bonito es!
Con un pie, otro pie
Una mano, otra mano
Un codo, otro codo
El juego chirimbolo que bonito es!
Con un pie, otro pie
Una mano, otra mano
Un codo, otro codo
El juego chirimbolo que bonito es!
Hey!

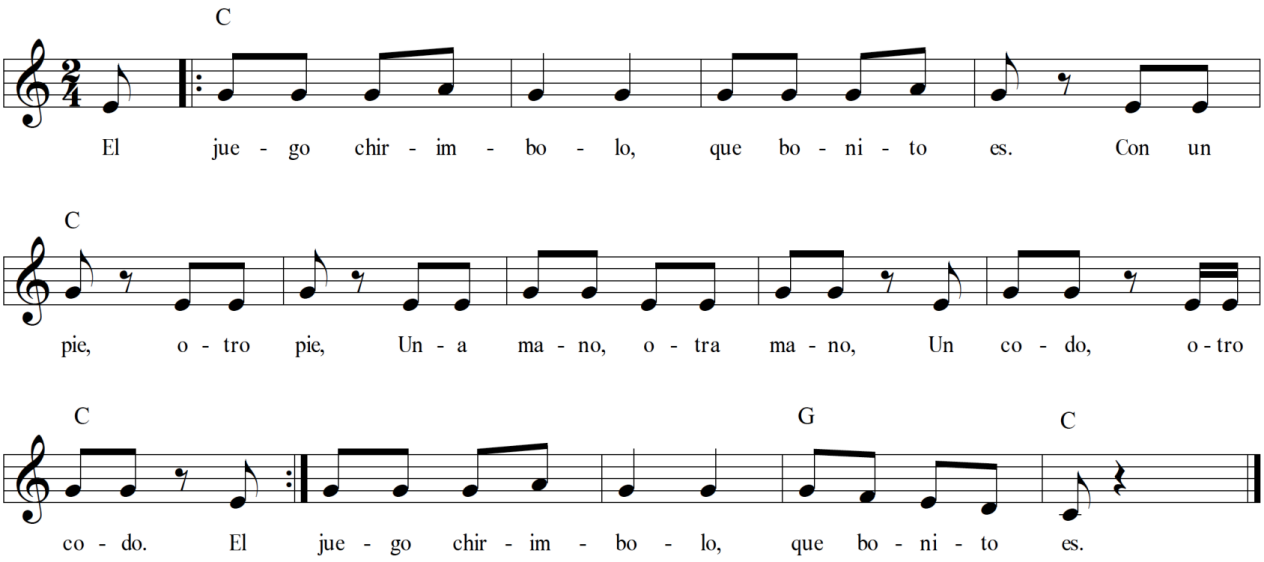
*Traditional children's song from Ecuador*

00:00 00:46

A fall visit between *PIO!* editor Brigid Finucane and international dance expert and CMN member Sanna Longden turned into a spontaneous dance tutorial that included this singing game. Sanna writes, "'El Juego Chirimbolo' is played by young children in Ecuador. Chirimbolo is a kind of nonsense word that refers to some sort of contraption or machine movement. A traditional singing game, it was presented to US educators by Elizabeth Villarreal Brennan. The object is to do it faster each time the game repeats."

Brigid passed the song on to Alina Celeste, and Alina presented it, to much acclaim, at the 2016 conference Round-Robin—another example of CMN connections!

The recording is provided by Alina Celeste, who sings it in the key of G, while the notation provided is in the key of C. Also be sure to watch this lively video version with Alina and 123 Andres.


C
El jue - go chir - im - bo - lo, que bo - ni - to es. Con un
C
pie, o - tro pie, Un - a ma - no, o - tra ma - no, Un co - do, o - tro
C G C
co - do. El jue - go chir - im - bo - lo, que bo - ni - to es.

Spanish:
El juego chirimbolo, que bonito es.
Con un pie, otro pie,
Una mano, otra mano,
Un codo, otro codo.
El juego chirimbolo, que bonito es.

Translation:
The chirimbolo game, how beautiful it is.
With a foot, other foot,
One hand, other hand,
One elbow, other elbow.
The chirimbolo game, how beautiful it is.

There are many movement variations for this dance, depending on the ages of the children dancing. Consult YouTube for more ideas!

**Circle Game**
Students stand up in a circle and hold hands. Dancers circle, feet to the beat, through the end of the first line, "que bonito es." Like the "Hokey Pokey" dance, put in one foot, then the other; one hand, then the other; one elbow, then the other. You may add additional body parts. Repeat, increasing tempo.

**Partner Dance**
Partners face each other, hold hands, and take four small sideways steps together in one direction. On "con un pie," both dancers extend right foot and tap it to their partner's foot. Repeat with other foot. Continue by touching hands, then elbows. On the last line, partners take four small steps together in the opposite direction.

Continue with game, increasing tempo with each repetition. Sanna suggests ending the song with "wring the dishrag," where dancers lift both their arms overhead simultaneously in the same direction, turn back to back, then after making a complete turn, end in the starting position.

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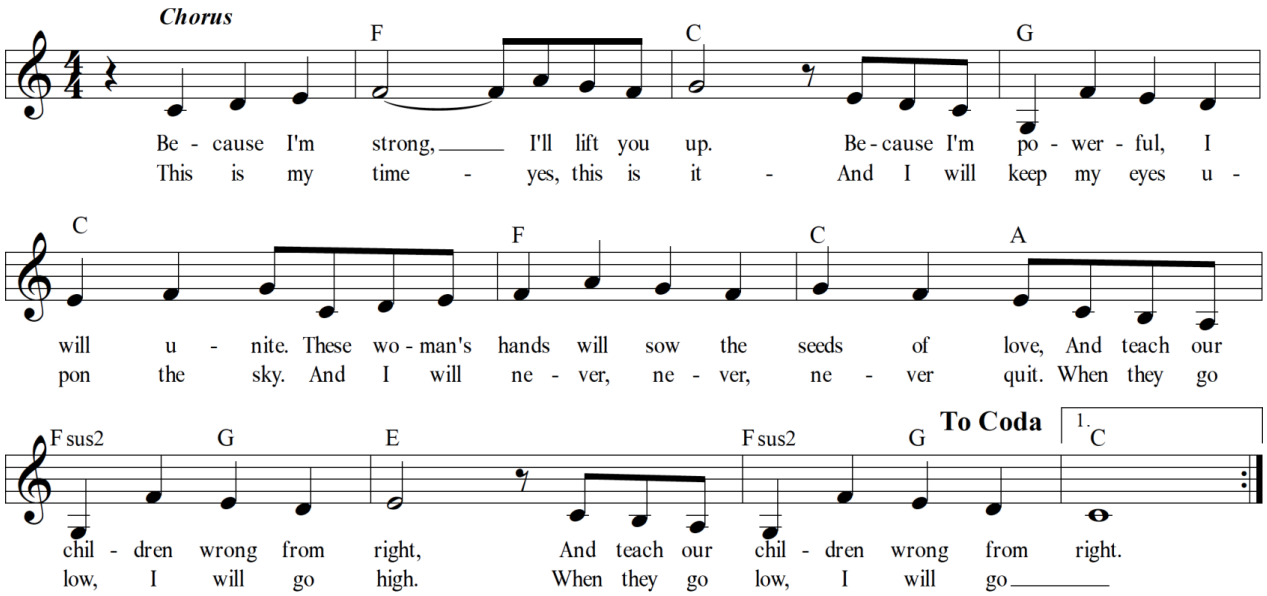
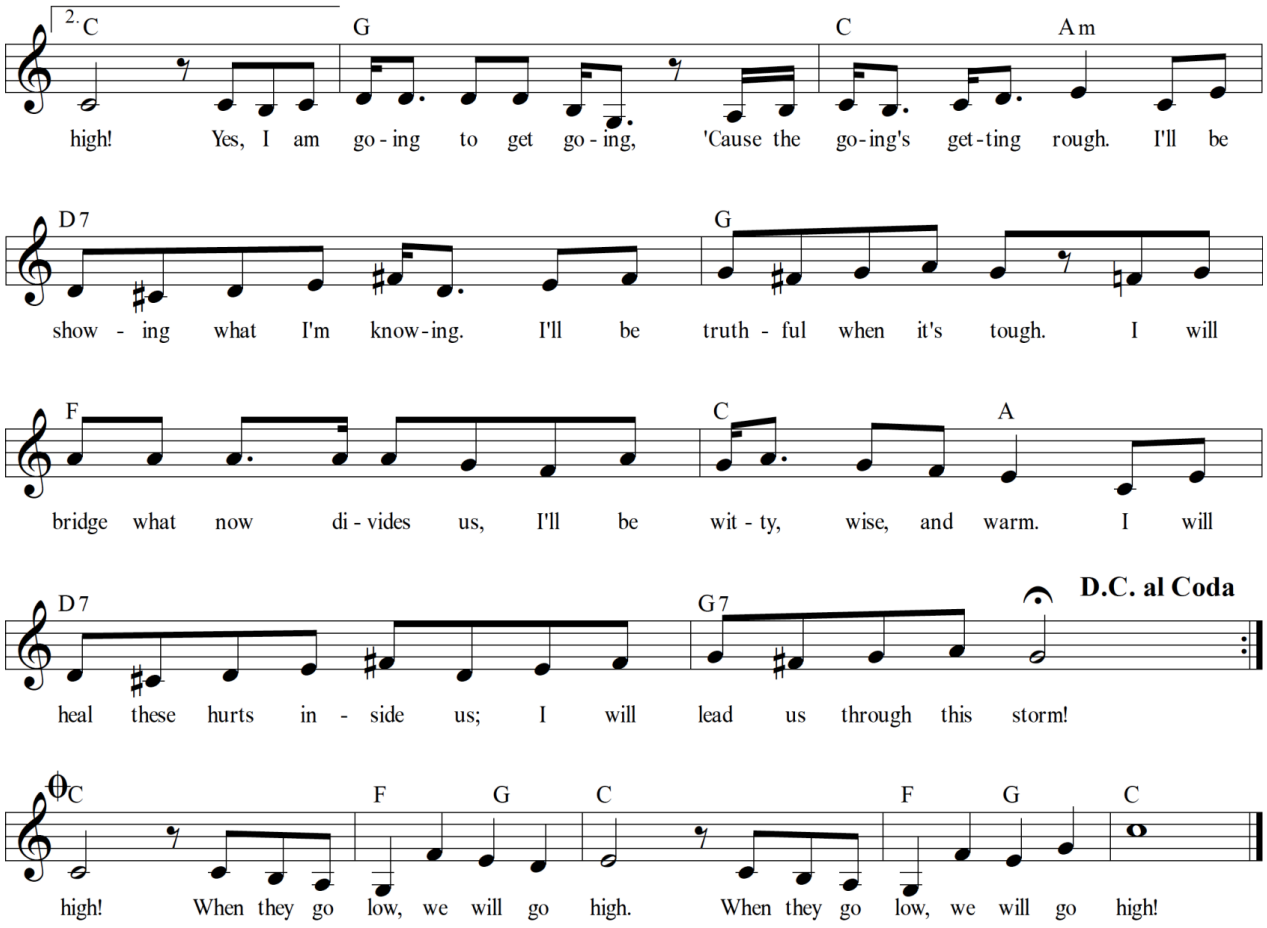
# We Will Go High

*Words and music by Galen R. Brandt*
*© 2016 Galen R. Brandt*

00:00 04:13

This song was conceived and written in its entirety at the 2016 CMN Conference in Los Gatos, California, inspired by Michelle Obama's October 13 speech. Galen writes, "With Michelle Obama's line ringing in my head and heart—'When they go low, we go high'—I woke early and, before I'd even gotten out of bed, wrote this song as a call for all of us to join together and lift each other up, speak our hearts, and be truthful while building bridges. To use our wit, warmth, and wisdom in the service of peace, justice, and compassion—exactly what CMN does in every classroom, on every stage, in every workshop, every single day. That afternoon I went to the activist workshop led by Sarah Pirtle and Bonnie Lockhart and offered this song for the first time to them, and now to you—because together, I truly do believe we will bring light to the darkness, now and in the years to come…and yes, together, as a world community of like-minded hearts, we will go high.

"The YouTube and MP3 recording of the song are in the key of A, which may be too low for many singers. Val Smalkin graciously notated the song and raised it to the key of C. Please feel free to adapt the lyrics so they work best for you."


Chorus
F C G
Be - cause I'm strong, I'll lift you up. Be - cause I'm po - wer - ful, I
This is my time - yes, this is it - And I will keep my eyes u -
C F C A
will u - nite. These wo - man's hands will sow the seeds of love, And teach our
pon the sky. And I will ne - ver, ne - ver, ne - ver quit. When they go
F sus2 G E F sus2 G To Coda 1. C
chil - dren wrong from right, And teach our chil - dren wrong from right.
low, I will go high. When they go low, I will go

2. C
G
C
Am
high! Yes, I am go-ing to get go-ing, 'Cause the go-ing's get-ting rough. I'll be
D7
G
show - ing what I'm know-ing. I'll be truth - ful when it's tough. I will
F
C
A
bridge what now di - vides us, I'll be wit - ty, wise, and warm. I will
D7
G7
D.C. al Coda
heal these hurts in - side us; I will lead us through this storm!
C
F
G
C
F
G
C
high! When they go low, we will go high. When they go low, we will go high!

*Chorus 1:*
Because I'm strong, I'll lift you up.
Because I'm powerful, I will unite.
These woman's hands will sow the seeds of love,
And teach our children wrong from right,
And teach our children wrong from right.
This is my time—yes, this is it—
And I will keep my eyes upon the sky.
And I will never, never, never quit.
When they go low, I will go high.
When they go low, I will go high!

*Verse 1:*
Yes, I am going to get going,
'Cause the going's getting rough.
I'll be showing what I'm knowing.
I'll be truthful when it's tough.
I will bridge what now divides us.
I'll be witty, wise, and warm.
I will heal these hurts inside us;
I will lead us through this storm!

*Chorus 2:*
Because I'm strong, I'll lift you up.
Because I'm powerful, I will unite.
These women's hands will sow the seeds of love,
And teach our children wrong from right,

*Verse 2:*
Yes, we are going to get going
'Cause the going's getting rough.
We'll be showing what we're knowing.
We'll be truthful when it's tough.
We will bridge what now divides us.
We'll be witty, wise, and warm.
We will heal these hurts inside us;
We will lead us through this storm!

*Chorus 3:*
Because we're strong, we'll lift you up.
Because we're powerful, we will unite.
These human hands will sow the seeds of love,
And teach our children wrong from right,
And teach our children wrong from right.
This is our time—yes, this is it—
And we will keep our eyes upon the sky.
And we will never, never, never quit.
When they go low, we will go high.
When they go low, we will go high!

*Coda:*
When they go low, we will go high.
When they go low, we will go high!

And teach our children wrong from right.
This is our time—yes, this is it—
And we will keep our eyes upon the sky.
And we will never, never, never quit.
When they go low, we will go high.
When they go low, we will go high!

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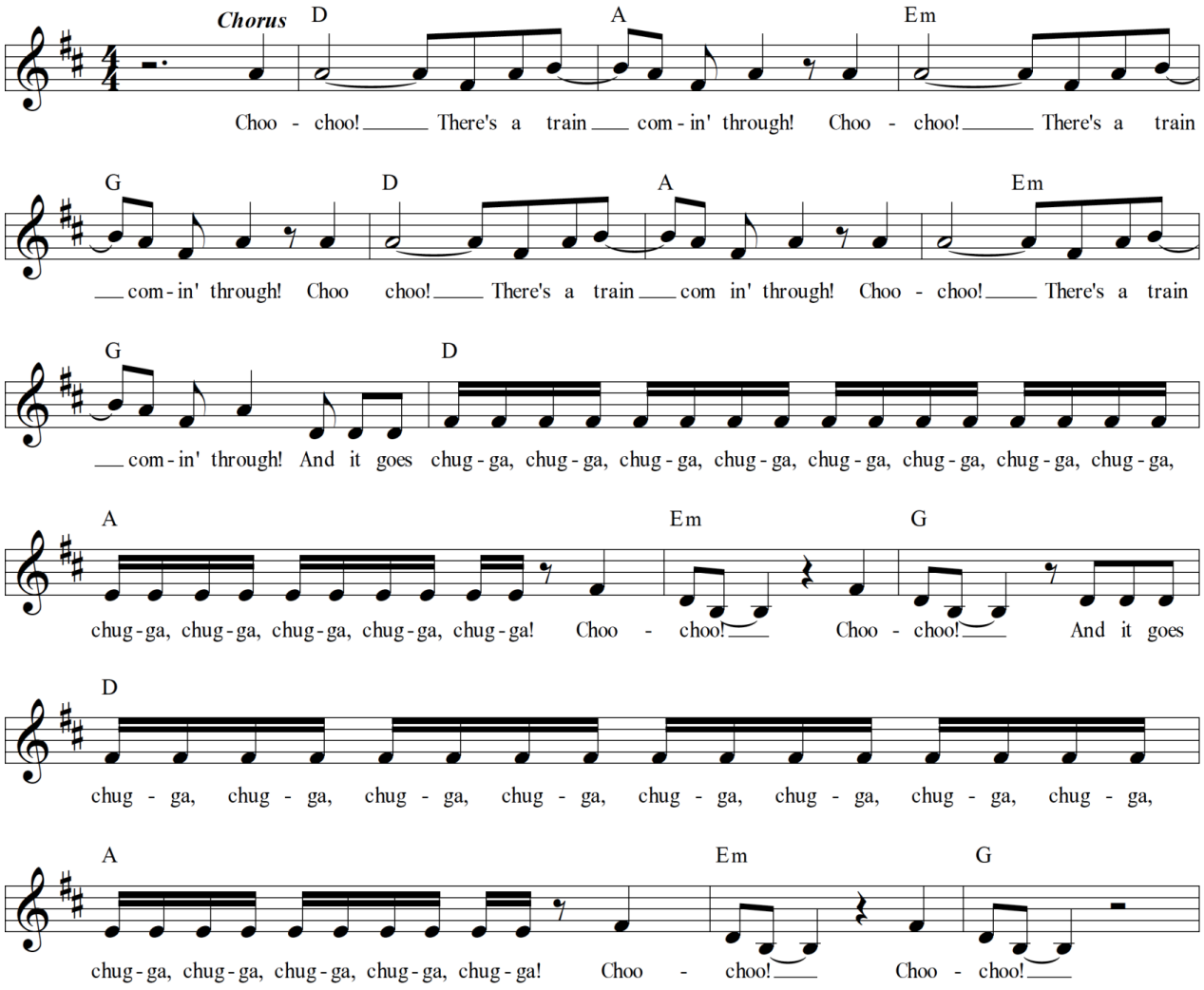
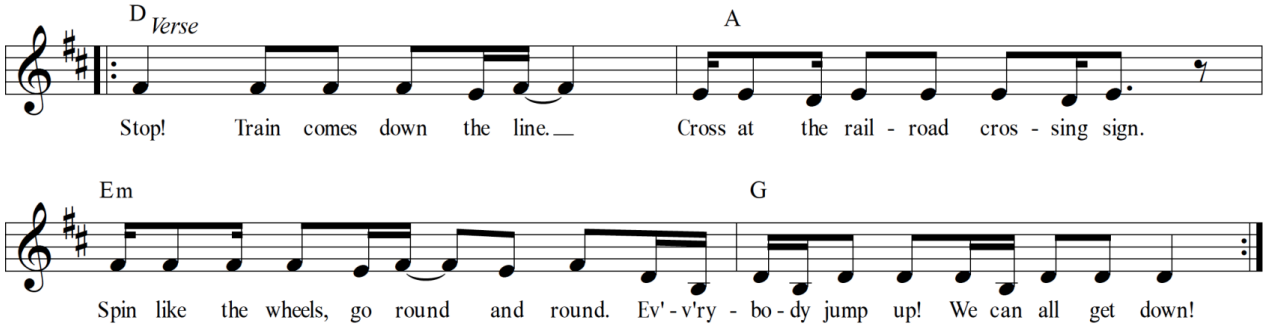
# Train Song

*Words and music by George Brian Sellner*
*© 2014 George Brian Sellner*

00:00 02:45

This delightful song was a hit at the CMN Annual International Conference in Los Gatos. George says, "I wanted to write a song about trains (because so many kids love trains), and I was just singing and playing around with the chord progressions in my bedroom, coming up with nothing that stuck. My daughter, Zoe, who was six at the time, just started singing 'Choo, Choo, there's a train coming through,' and it stuck! The rest of the song was written in around ten minutes!

Chorus
D A Em
Choo - choo! There's a train com - in' through! Choo - choo! There's a train
G D A Em
com - in' through! Choo choo! There's a train com in' through! Choo - choo! There's a train
G D
com - in' through! And it goes chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga,
A Em G
chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga! Choo - choo! Choo - choo! And it goes
D
chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga,
A Em G
chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga, chug - ga! Choo - choo! Choo - choo!


D Verse
A
Stop! Train comes down the line. Cross at the rail - road cros - sing sign.
Em
G
Spin like the wheels, go round and round. Ev' - v'ry - bo - dy jump up! We can all get down!

*Chorus:*
Choo-choo! There's a train comin' through!
Choo-choo! There's a train comin' through!
Choo-choo! There's a train comin' through!
Choo-choo! There's a train comin' through!

And it goes chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga,
Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga,
Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga!
Choo-choo! Choo-choo!

And it goes chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga,
Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga,
Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga!
Choo-choo! Choo-choo!

*Verse:*
Stop! Train comes down the line.
Cross at the railroad crossing sign.
Spin like the wheels, go round and round.
Ev'rybody jump up! We can all get down!

*Chorus*

"I love using this song during class because of the simple, silly, and fun choreography that goes with it (especially the 'chugga chugga' because we shake our bottoms)!"

Out of the mouths of babes!

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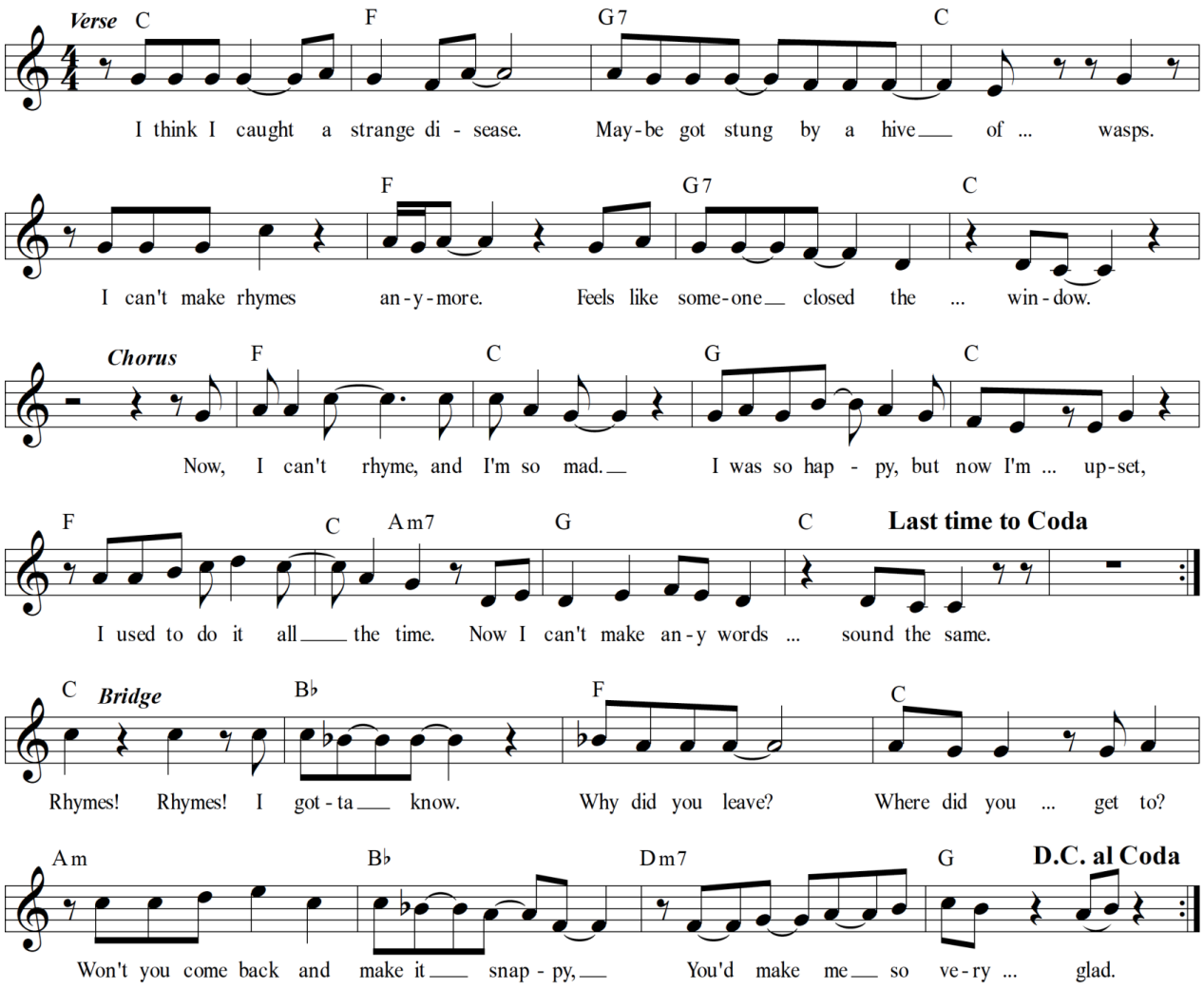
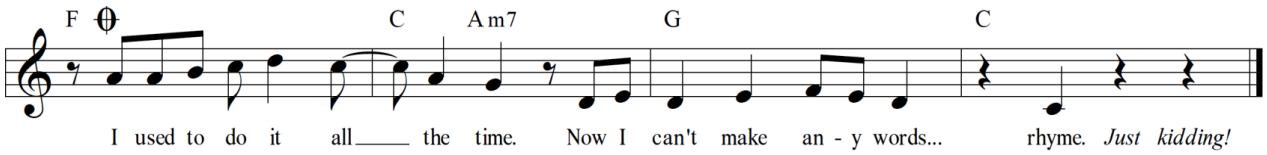
# I Can't Rhyme

*Words and music by Lanny Sherwin*
*© 2005 Lanny Sherwin/ASCAP*

00:00 02:51

Laughter is healthy all the world over, and thus we include Lanny Sherwin's "I Can't Rhyme." Lanny says the song's birth is a funny story. "I entered it in the Dallas Songwriter's Association contest, and it not only won first place in Children's, but first Overall! Beat out Rock, Pop, Urban, and Country. Big smile out of that one!" It gets a big smile out of us as well.

Verse
C F G7 C
I think I caught a strange di - sease. May-be got stung by a hive of ... wasps.
F G7 C
I can't make rhymes an-y-more. Feels like some-one closed the ... win-dow.
Chorus
F C G C
Now, I can't rhyme, and I'm so mad. I was so hap - py, but now I'm ... up-set,
F C Am7 G C
Last time to Coda
I used to do it all the time. Now I can't make an-y words ... sound the same.
C Bridge B♭ F C
Rhymes! Rhymes! I got - ta know. Why did you leave? Where did you ... get to?
Am B♭ Dm7 G
D.C. al Coda
Won't you come back and make it snap - py, You'd make me so ve-ry ... glad.

I think I caught a strange disease.
Maybe got stung by a hive of…wasps.
I can't make rhymes anymore.
Feels like someone closed the…window.

*Chorus:*
Now, I can't rhyme, and I'm so mad.
I was so happy, but now I'm…upset,
I used to do it all the time.
Now I can't make any words…sound the same.

Before my rhymes went all wrong,
I played my music. I sang my…tunes,
I played guitar—I was one of the best
You could hear me from east to…California.

*Chorus*

*Bridge:*
Rhymes! Rhymes! I gotta know
Why did you leave? Where did you…get to?
Won't you come back and make it snappy,
You'd make me so very…glad.

I go to bed each night and pray
Things will be better on a brand new…morning,
Then I awake in the same old rut.
Boy! This is sure a big pain in the…neck.

*Chorus*

*Coda:*
I used to do it all the time,
Now I can't make any words…rhyme.
*Just kidding!*

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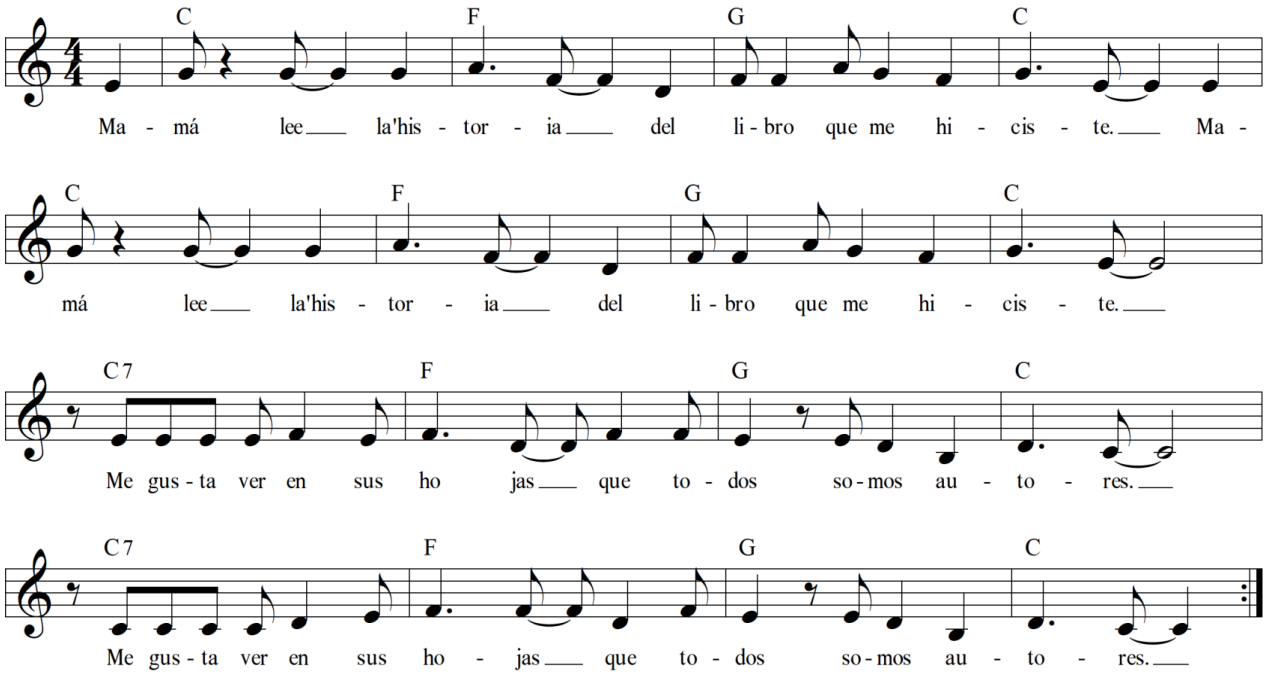
# Mamá, Lee la Historia (Mommy, Read Me the Story)

*Words and music by Peter Baird*
*© 1996 Peter Baird*

00:00 03:45

Peter shared this song with CMN at the Round-Robin during the 2000 Conference in Warwick, New York. Peter, a bilingual teacher, wrote "Mamá, Lee la Historia" in 1996 as a theme song for a parent literacy program at Fairsite Elementary School in Gait, California. The literacy program was called Todos Somos Autores / We Are All Authors. Mexican immigrant parents were assisted in writing books to their children about their life struggles and dreams. The children were then encouraged to write a book back to their parents. In this way, each could say "Read me the story, the one you wrote for me." The verses are sung back and forth in Spanish and English, altering the rhythmic values slightly to fit the English words. Change the first word in this zipper song to fit the occasion.


C F G C
Ma - má lee la'his - tor - ia del li - bro que me hi - cis - te. Ma -
C F G C
má lee la'his - tor - ia del li - bro que me hi - cis - te.
C 7 F G C
Me gus - ta ver en sus ho jas que to - dos so - mos au - to - res.
C 7 F G C
Me gus - ta ver en sus ho - jas que to - dos so - mos au - to - res.

Mamá lee la historia del libro que me hiciste. (2x)
Me gusta ver en sus hojas que todos somos autores. (2x)

Mommy, read me the story, the one you wrote for me. (2x)
I like to read in its pages that authors all are we. (2x)

Papá…

Daddy…

Mi hijo…

Son…

Mi hija…

Daughter…

*Other Ideas:*
Amiga (f) /Amigo (m): My friend
Abuelo: Grandpa
Abuela: Grandma
Maestra (f) / Maestro (m): Teacher

Peter is happy to report that California Senate Bill 1174 (Proposition 58), known as the Multilingual Education Act, passed in fall 2016, repealing the English-only immersion requirement and waiving provisions required by Proposition 227 of 1998.

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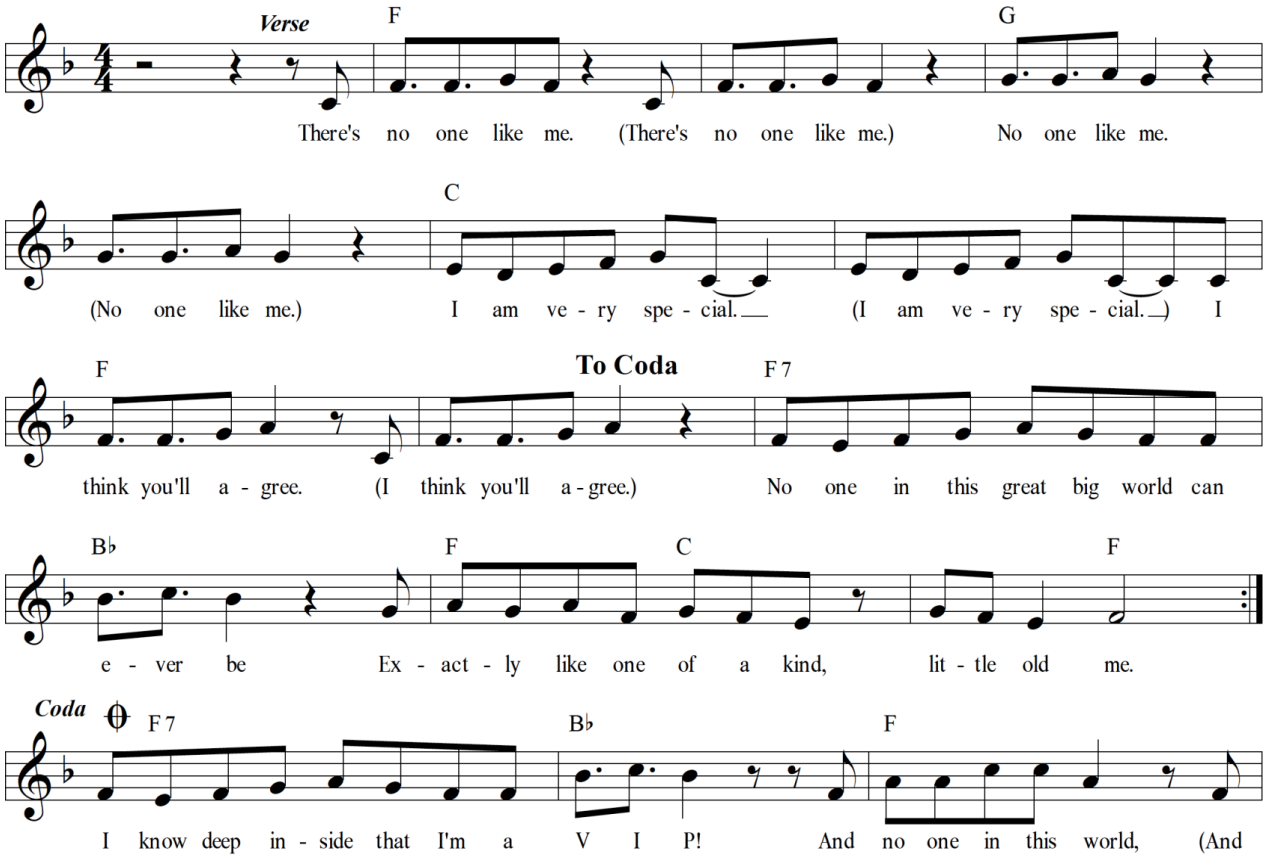
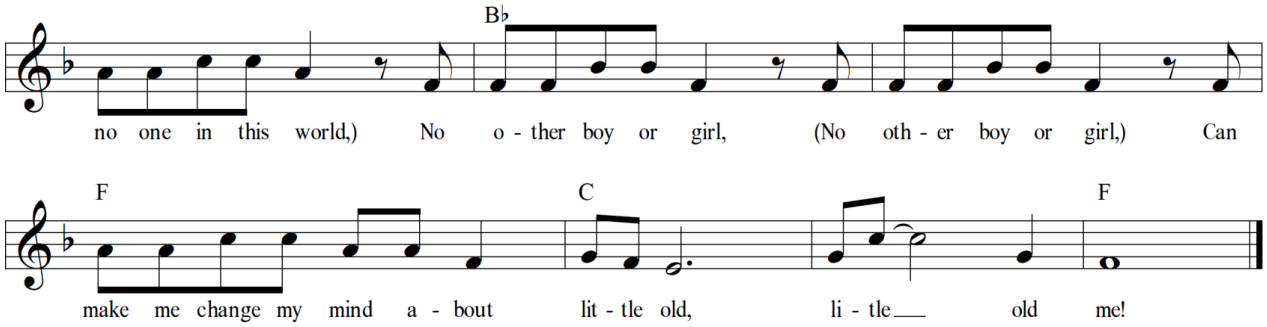
# No One Like Me

*Words and music by Pam Minor*
*© 2011 Pam Minor*

00:00 02:51

Pam Minor and *PIO!* Songs Editor Val Smalkin started off as Val and Pam KinderSingers in 1987. By the year 2004, when Val's knee gave out completely, Val was happy to have Pam continue on by herself as Pam, the Kindersinger. This song by Pam is one of Val's favorites. When Pam performs it, all the children and adults echo with glee. The idea of "no one like me, you, or us" has been done before, but Pam makes it a special sing-along, using jaunty tags like "no one in this great big world will ever be / exactly like one of a kind, little old me."

Verse
F
G
There's no one like me. (There's no one like me.) No one like me.
C
(No one like me.) I am ve - ry spe - cial. (I am ve - ry spe - cial.) I
F
To Coda
F 7
think you'll a - gree. (I think you'll a - gree.) No one in this great big world can
B♭
F
C
F
e - ver be Ex - act - ly like one of a kind, lit - tle old me.
Coda
F 7
B♭
F
I know deep in - side that I'm a V I P! And no one in this world, (And




There's no one like me. (echo)
No one like me. (echo)
I am very special. (echo)
I think you'll agree. (echo)
No one in this great big world can ever be
Exactly like one of a kind, little old me!

There's no one like you. (echo)
No one like you. (echo)
You're important stuff. (echo)
Let's make a hullaballoo. (a hullaballoo)
Listen to the fanfare, there is much ado,
'Cause lots of people care about little old you!

There's no one like us. (echo)
No one like us. (echo)
Please, it isn't necessary, (echo)
Don't make a fuss. (echo)
Oh! You shouldn't have sent a rock star bus,
'Cause we already know we are spectacular us!

There's no one like me. (echo)
No one like me. (echo)
I am very special. (echo)
I think you'll agree. (echo)
I know deep inside that I'm a VIP!
And no one in this world, (echo)
No other boy or girl, (echo)
Can make me change my mind about little old, little old me!

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## Let's Talk Tech

# The Social Media Monster

*by Alina Celeste*

I get a lot of questions from CMN members about social media: how it works, what it's good for, and why it's considered so essential in the marketing world.

As with most monsters that live in our closets and under our beds, social media becomes much less terrifying when examined more closely. Indeed, embracing its use can open up a slew of opportunities and a wonderful exchange of new ideas and perspectives. To that end, I have created a short survey focused on four of the most popular platforms around today. Explore the one that sounds most interesting to you. You might be surprised to discover that it serves you wonderfully in your career and your life.

I have excluded Facebook from this guide, as it is one of the most widely used platforms and I am assuming that most of you have some experience with it. Also, due to relatively recent changes, Facebook has made it difficult to get much exposure without paying for advertising, so it is less relevant to those of you trying to find ways to get your work in front of a wider audience for free. While I recommend having a Facebook page for your group or brand so that you can be found, I think there are other platforms where time spent growing a presence is more likely to get you the exposure that you are looking for.

### Twitter

What it is: An online news and social platform, where users can write and read 140-character "tweets." Due to the character limit, tweets are carefully crafted and to the point. Unlike Facebook, you don't have "friends" nor can you control who sees what. Tweets are always public. This is an important factor to keep in mind. There are numerous stories, like this one (http://abcnews.go.com/International/woman-fired-tweet-aids-africa-sparks-internet-outrage/story?id=21298519), of "private citizens" tweeting something and making a much bigger splash than they could have ever imagined. While you can message someone privately on Twitter, this is a feature that is used infrequently and can only be done if you "follow" each other.

**Pros:**

- Twitter is always live and public so you can tweet the same information several times over an extended time period. The transient nature of the medium means you always have a new audience.

- The brevity of tweets makes them easy to digest, so it's a great time passer. I often use Twitter while standing in line.
- Due to the public nature, you can actually reach large organizations or public figures. This has been especially helpful with large corporations. It has become common knowledge that if you complain to or about a brand (http://www.forbes.com/sites/grantmartin/2014/10/24/how-to-complain-to-airlines-on-twitter-and-what-youre-doing-wrong/#59e57a3a314e) like Delta, Sony, or Nabisco, they are very likely to respond.
- There are many programs out there that can help you automate tweets in a way that seems natural and that you can control, meaning that you can maintain a presence on Twitter without having to actually be on Twitter all the time. See Kayte Deioma's article (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/twitter-for-childrens-musicians.aspx) in the Fall 2015 issue of *PIO!* to find out more.
- It is easy to include photos or article links in a tweet and provide an eye-grabbing image or point your audience to more information.

**Cons:**

- Tweets have a language all their own that can be intimidating.
- Anything that needs to be said in more than 140 characters will be hard to share, though some users elect to use serial tweets to extend their message.

### Pinterest

What it is: Pinterest is meant to be your virtual corkboard. You can pin websites and blog posts relevant to something you like, want to try, or are inspired by on different boards. These boards will have themes like "Food I want to make," "Crafts I want to do in my classroom," or "Ideas for my wedding." While you can use Pinterest privately, keeping your posts public will make them easier to find and share by your demographic.

**Pros:**

- Pinterest is very popular among teachers and moms—groups that are important to children's musicians!
- The visual aspect is appealing, and you don't have to come up with any well-phrased comments for attention. People with your taste will eventually be guided to you by your pins.
- You can generate content or choose to curate it. Many Pinterest users become popular for their ability to find and collect unique ideas, highlight crafts, or share teaching materials or strategies.
- Once your interests are established, Pinterest will send weekly posts of pins that speak to that theme, making it even easier to engage.

**Cons:**

- Because of the craft-heavy nature of many of the boards, it can be tricky to figure out how music belongs.
- You have to spend a considerable amount of time pinning in order to grow a following.

### Instagram

What it is: Instagram is a social media platform built to share photos and videos. It is especially popular among visual artists and models. Content can be shared both publicly and privately, and you can make your account completely private so that you have to personally approve any new follower.

**Pros:**

- As with Pinterest, you don't have to worry about pithy phrasing or jokes with Instagram. The visual is all that matters.
- There are many tools available within the app to enhance your pictures.
- A smartphone with a camera is all you need to get started.

**Cons:**

- It can be tough to apply your work as a musician to Instagram. However, many musicians have active and successful accounts. Check out kids' musicians Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band (https://www.instagram.com/p/BPYHBKtADHk/?hl=en). They use Instagram to tell a visual story about their days.

## YouTube

What it is: One of the most widely viewed and used platforms in the world, YouTube is for videos. Pages can be public or private, and you also have the option of "monetizing" your videos in order to receive revenue from advertising.

**Pros:**

- YouTube is simple and doesn't come with lots of extra language to learn, like hashtags and tagging. Just shoot a video and upload it! Please refer to my column "Adventures in YouTubing (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/columns/adventures-in-youtubing.aspx)" in the Fall 2016 issue of *PIO!* to find out more.
- YouTube is one of the fastest growing networks for children's content in the world.

**Cons:**

- Making videos can be intimidating for newbies.
- It takes a combination of work, knowledge, and luck to get noticed. And luck is the most important factor!

Each one of these platforms make it possible to reach a wider audience. Each one comes with its own quirks, lingo, and rock stars. With nearly all of them, you can control how private or public you want your activity to be—but given that you'll be exploring these platforms with the goal of getting the word out, I'd suggest staying as public as possible. One thing all these platforms will do for you, even if you aren't very active, is make you more accessible. One thing they all require is time.

## A few parting tips:

- Seek out other users who share your interests, or whom you find inspiring. Learn from them and apply what you've learned to your own account.
- Communicate with other users. I've made real-life friends from Internet-only beginnings!

- Expect to use the platform at least a year before you gain anything like a substantial following.
- Post consistently to see best results.
- Have fun!

## Music In Bloom

# In Praise of Organization

*by Maureen Conlin*

When music is in bloom for all the little ones, chaos is often blossoming out of sight in the closets, basements, shelves, garages, and other spaces where we store the puppets, books, creative movement props, musical instruments, and sound equipment needed to implement our programs. There are a lot of bells and whistles that go into our early childhood music making, and creating organized systems for managing our props can be one of our biggest challenges. Without these systems in place, managing "stuff" can overshadow our real work, which is to encourage young children to explore, imagine, create, and move through music. For those of us who travel from room to room, center to center, or school to school and have to "grab and go" with all our equipment, here are a few ways I keep organized.

**Books**

Organize books on bookshelves by category. Painted stirring sticks, purchased at a home improvement store for a dollar or less, are a great way to categorize the books in your inventory. I suggest that you purchase a label maker and label each side of the paint stick with a particular category. The Brother PT-D400 (http://www.brother-usa.com/Labeling_Solutions/ModelDetail/7/PTD400/Overview) label maker is sturdy, efficient, and easy to use, especially if you use it regularly for business.

Place the sticks in alphabetical order between the different categories of books, e.g., animals, dinosaurs, holidays. The paint stirrers extend a few inches beyond the book spines and make it easy to find what you are looking for.

**Instruments**

One section of my storage shelving is dedicated exclusively to musical instruments. Instruments are stored in clear bins and labeled as well as organized by category. Xylophones are placed together, egg and fruit shakers are in another bin, wood blocks in yet another, and instruments used with toddlers and babies in another. I have an assortment of hand drums stored in a container that I can transport from class to class.

A pegboard can also help to keep you organized and can be purchased inexpensively at your local home improvement store. Purchase brackets and hang musical instruments for easy visibility and use.

**Puppets**
Organize puppets in large see-through containers and label each container indicating the type of puppets, e.g., farm animals, people, zoo animals, dinosaurs. That way, the right puppets are easily accessible when needed. I hang empty canvas bags on a rack close by so that when I'm packing to go to a school I can transition the puppets into the bag and into my car.

**Movement Props**
Colorful scarves and stretchy bands can be stored in new, empty paint cans along with a file card of ideas and songs to be used with these creative movement props. Paint cans are available to purchase at local home improvement stores in the paint aisle. Children enjoy the drama and suspense of watching as you open the paint cans and share the contents with them!

**Costumes**
Purchase garment bags or use a rolling rack for costumes you might wear during Halloween or other holidays, or when highlighting seasons, classroom themes, or music from another country. Over the years I've collected a large assortment of hats for different occasions, and clip hangers to store the hats so that they don't get smashed in a bin or closet.

**Sheet Music and Lyrics**
Insert sheet music and lyrics into non-glare sheet protectors and place them in binders, labeled for easy access and use. I use binders for specific topics such as "nature's music," "bug songs," "Christmas music," "harvest time," and "summer songs." When each season or class theme comes around, songs and ideas are at my fingertips.

**Playlists and CDs**
Keeping a playlist of songs that I use for specific themes or levels of classes is also helpful in keeping me organized. Constructing playlists on iTunes is a wonderful tool that keeps your music organized and readily available. Some examples of these song collections include parachute play, bean bags, and movement songs. My "February Friendship" playlist contains songs about love and friendship alphabetically organized.

My collection of CDs is organized in a similar fashion: all the CDs are a bin with drawers, organized alphabetically by artist and/or style of music, and separated by labeled index cards.

**Extras**
I use duffle bags to store the wires and connectors and miscellaneous items needed for sound equipment. I also keep a small pouch inside the bag for extra batteries, scissors, tape, and extension cords that might be needed at a performance.

**Make Organization a Habit**

I must emphasize that none of these suggestions will work unless you follow through and commit to forming new habits! Research (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-clear/forming-new-habits_b_5104807.html) shows it takes twenty-one days (or more) to form a new habit—but the end result is well worth it.

Remember these important elements:

- Have a designated home and/or system for your materials.
- Store your materials by category (creative movement props together, musical instruments together, puppets together, etc).
- Do not drop your props in a "parking lot" of miscellaneous items.
- When cleaning up or unpacking, keep each item in your hand going to its final destination (home).
- Remember it takes seconds to return a prop to its home, but hours to find it in the parking lot later.
- A system is only as good as the creator and manager. There is no substitute for good habits, resolve, and the conscious effort to make the system work.

Happy organizing and happy singing!

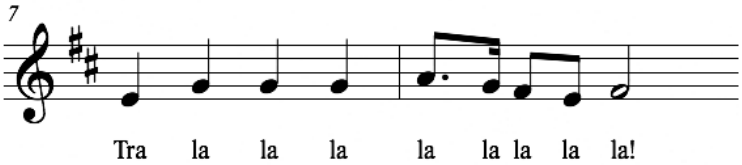
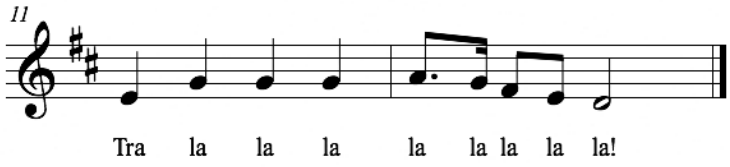
## Music With Older Kids

# Teaching Fourth and Fifth Grade Music, Part II

*by Valerie Leonhart Smalkin*

In my Fall 2016 *PIO!* column (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/columns/teaching-fourth-and-fifth-grade-music.aspx), we covered planning, welcoming, and warming up both physically and vocally. This article will focus on novel ways to help children learn and memorize melodies and lyrics. Before I knew better—that is, before seasoned teachers told me that I could not expect children to memorize an entire Christmas song—I used to take 353 elementary school children and in the space of four music classes (blessedly, only twenty in each class) help them learn and memorize their Christmas Pageant songs. It worked. Twenty years later, at the insistence of more learned educators, I succumbed to writing the words on tag board, but secretly, I still think that learning to memorize (and gaining confidence in one's ability to memorize) is an extremely useful tool. Sure helped me in law school!

**Melody Games**

But I digress. When teaching a song, I divide the song into sections and teach one section per forty-minute period starting with the most difficult. One anthem I recall had two identical lines except for the last note. The last note stepped up in the first and down in the second. Unless ALL the children were conscious of the difference, the two lines would inevitably end up sounding the same. My solution? Create a poster for each of the melodic lines and place them on opposite sides of the room. I used 13 x 17-inch paper and laminated them for extended use. For example, from "J'aime la Galette (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/songs/jaime-la-galette.aspx)":

versus

Sing one or the other melody and ask the children to move to the picture they think they heard. In a room with no desks or chairs, they can run to the picture. And yes, of course, there will be those children who simply follow the child they know is always right. In that case, have the child who excels choose and sing one of the lines, leaving the other children to decide for themselves. This method is always fun and you can encourage the "followers" to take the risk and try to figure it out for themselves.

The next game is to point to one of the posters and have the students volunteer to sing it. In the end, you will have repeated the melody at least twenty-five times without boredom! They will know it in fifteen minutes.

**Melody Repetition**
Puppets. Yes, puppets are a great help here. And do not worry: my eighth grade students would still ask for the puppets, and the kindergarten through fifth grade students simply adored them. Here is a list of ways puppets can help you teach lyrics:

1. You sing the melodic portion you are teaching and have the puppet repeat it either correctly or incorrectly, letting your students decide if the puppet succeeded. I always make the errors blatant, so as not to cause confusion. Ask the children to explain where the puppet went wrong.

2. The puppet sings the melody and the students repeat it.

3. The puppet tries to sing the melody, forgets, and the students must refresh the puppet's recollection.

4. The puppet wants to hear each student sing the melody.

5. The puppet wants to hear the group sing.

**Never Sing With Your Students (if you can help it)**
Students must be able to hear themselves. If all they hear is your lovely voice, they will think they are singing like you do. If all they hear is their own, they will learn to adjust what needs adjusting to sound better. So you sing, they repeat; you sing, they repeat, et cetera. And you ask them to listen and describe what they hear. If you ask them what you might do to improve they will impress you with their suggestions.

**Teaching Students to Match Pitch**
One of my all-time favorite accomplishments is to teach a child whom some would call "tone-deaf" to sing. Usually the inability to match pitch develops because no one in the child's family ever learned to sing on pitch. To help the students understand, I ask, "What would happen if you grew up in a family where missing the ball in baseball was considered a home run?" Obviously, the child would spend his or her life missing the ball until someone informed him or her differently. So it is with singing on or off pitch.

My method for having the child experience on-pitch singing is this: First, find a time to work with the student individually, away from the other students.

Second, ask the child to sing a note, any note at all, and hold it. That may take a little coaching. Sometimes I have them say the word "a" and just try to not stop saying it. I might even need to make them aware of the glottal stop involved in saying "a." That is, I ask the child to get ready to say the word "a" but not to say it…yet. In a few seconds, I tell them to go ahead and say "a" with awareness of what's happening in the throat. Hopefully they will feel their throat open and close. Then they are ready to say an extended "a" keeping the throat open. Third, I either match that note or sing something very dissonant. Fourth, I ask the child to say whether my pitch matches theirs or not. At first there is confusion, but after about five tries they hear it, perhaps for the first time in their lives. Seeing the light bulb go off is thrilling! And note that LISTENING is key to this process!

**Cementing Lyrics**

As for memorizing words, I have the advantage of being the world's worst memorizer, so I can challenge students to best me and they always do. One helpful tactic, which you surely use already, is to make up movements to go with the words. There are two ways to go with this and both have merit. The first is to use American Sign Language (ASL). There is a plethora of Internet resources for sign language, one being the Handspeak Dictionary (http://www.handspeak.com/word/). It's always best to check your signs with someone who is fluent in ASL, however, because like with any foreign language, you may not get it right all on your own.

The second approach is to have your students make up the signs to help remember the words. The advantage of this method is that it's great fun for the students and not just another thing to memorize.

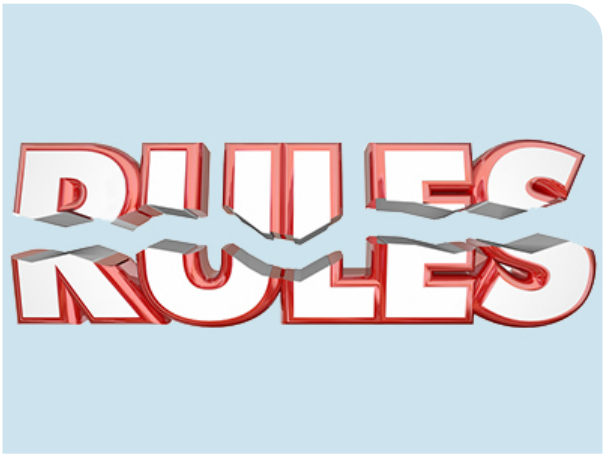
An entirely different tack is to write the lyrics on the smart board (or blackboard) and let the students decide which word to erase having committed it to memory. Continue doing so until there are no more words on the board.

Do you have teaching ideas to share? Please send them to me at Val@SillyGooseAndVal.com.

## Pro Song

# Rules for Breaking Rules

*by Monty Harper*




Perhaps you're one of those songwriters who bristle at the very idea of following rules: songs are subjective, so do what makes you happy! Or maybe you're one who endeavors to write flawless songs, void of any "mistakes." Either attitude comes with caveats: ignore the rules and you may write an incredibly creative song few will appreciate; follow them too slavishly and you may write a bland song devoid of charm or character.

Likely, though, you fall somewhere in the middle, among those of us who say, "Follow the rules, except when it's better not to."

If you're stuck, or your song isn't great, could adherence to some rule be the culprit? I would say probably not! Imposed structure is actually a friend to the muse. This is why a blank page seems so daunting; anything could go there. But once you know that what you need is a four-beat line that rhymes with "freed," ideas pop up like poppy seeds, and words flow forth with facile speed!

I'd argue you're actually more likely to get stuck or to dislike your song because you've *broken* a rule, which has led you into uncharted or difficult territory. For this reason alone it is wise to learn the rules, learn them well, and generally follow them.

But when is it wise to break the rules? When can thinking outside the rule-box elevate your song? Are there rules for breaking the rules?

Let's start by acknowledging that not all songwriting rules spring from the same source. Considering the nature of a particular rule can help shed light on whether and when to break it.

Some rules may be self-imposed. Joe McDermott, a songwriter friend of mine, once worked with Stan and Jan Berenstain, creators of The Berenstain Bears (http://www.berenstainbears.com), who were mentored by Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss). Joe told me the Berenstains passed along a rule that for young children, perfect rhymes are mandatory. This is because young children are just developing an ear for language, and recognizing rhyming families is an important part of that process.

This rule represented a personal commitment to the needs of a particular audience. It's not the sort of self-imposed rule you'd ever want to break. But

another way to impose a rule upon yourself is by assuming a song has to be a certain way when it doesn't. Seeing past such an assumption can yield glorious results.

When I wrote the song "Wind Energy (http://montyharper.bandcamp.com/track/wind-energy)," I started with a list of words and actions involved with turning wind into electricity. I wanted to write a cumulative song, but I couldn't figure out a refrain because all the key words seemed difficult or impossible to rhyme. My breakthrough came when I reminded myself that a song doesn't have to rhyme, nor does it have to include a chorus. I wrote out what I wanted to say as simply and directly as I could, and that sentence became the basis for my entire lyric, with no rhymes and no refrain.

Some rules are not individually but collectively self-imposed, i.e. they arise through tradition. Such are the rules that govern song form. Songs generally follow one of a handful of preset structures with some variation. These include "verse/verse/verse," "verse/chorus," "verse/chorus/bridge," and "AABA." Our brains respond to familiar patterns, so by following the beaten path we write songs that are very accessible, even on the first listen. Yet the particulars of these patterns are somewhat arbitrary; music of other cultures, time periods, or genres follow different forms.

This opens a possibility: with compelling enough content, a song may break form and still remain accessible to the listener. Paul McCartney's song "Uncle Albert" moves between five distinct musical sections in a unique pattern, fitting no particular song form, and it went to number one on the Billboard charts. One of my most popular songs, "Take Me to Your Library (http://montyharper.bandcamp.com/track/take-me-to-your-library-6)," follows this odd pattern: ABABABCAB2DCABD. I knew I was breaking convention when I wrote it, but I couldn't find a better way to tell the whole story, and it works really well!

These renegade songs work because they honor a much deeper rule, the very rule that gives rise to traditional song structure in the first place: in every aspect, a song must strike a balance between repetition and novelty. This rule must never be broken because at its heart it is a statement about the way our brains work. Too much repetition bores us, while too much novelty loses our attention. Some songs are close to one extreme or the other: "The Star-Spangled Banner" is through-composed, with very little repetition to the melody; Harry Nilsson's "Put the Lime in the Coconut" reached number eight on the Billboard charts as one of the most repetitive songs ever recorded. But I defy you to name a successful song that lies completely at one end of the spectrum!

Another "brain-based" set of rules centers around prosody. The accents in your melody should match the natural emphases given to each syllable of each word. Otherwise, due to the way we process aural language, your lyrics may sound jarring or distracting, or may fail to come across clearly. But this rule seems less central to our enjoyment of a song than the novelty/repetition rule and is often broken for increased freedom of word choice.

Steve Weeks (http://www.steveweeksmusic.com/) is a children's songwriter who consistently breaks rules: he often emphasizes the wrong syllables, his lines scan differently from verse to verse, and he uses filler phrases such as "you see" to complete rhymes. According to any songwriting rulebook, Steve Weeks should be struggling, and yet he is a highly acclaimed recording artist whose lyrical style is described as fresh and unique. In fact, many of his songs

have climbed the charts on Kids Place Live (http://www.siriusxm.com/kidsplacelive) (satellite radio), including four that went to number one!

How does he get away with all that rule breaking?

First of all, Steve Weeks gets all the other rules right. His songs feature infectious melodies and arrangements, rock-solid choruses and hooks, zany story lines, and heaps of heart. This helps, but what ultimately excuses his rule breaking is his clever word play. In his first few albums, each song is dedicated to a letter of the alphabet. Most of the important words begin with the sound of that particular letter. Steve consistently chooses words that create alliteration, sometimes to the detriment of good prosody, accurate scansion, or impeccable rhyming.

In other words, by breaking selective rules, he has gained the freedom to create something uniquely engaging.

I like to think of this as a kind of slight of hand. The average listener either doesn't notice, ignores, or forgives a few awkward moments while their attention is drawn to a particularly charming effect. In contrast, it's sometimes desirable to go big, placing an infraction smack dab in the spotlight where the listener cannot fail to appreciate it.

My song "Love This Baby (http://montyharper.bandcamp.com/track/love-this-baby)" is in 4/4 time, with four-line verses that set up an AABB rhyme scheme. Instead of completing the final rhyme at the end of line four as expected, I start the chorus two beats early with a non-rhyming word. By the rules of songwriting, this ought to throw the listener off kilter, leaving them dissatisfied with the resolution of the verse. Why would I do such a thing?

Consider the lyric and you'll see the reason:

> Baby loves bananas. Baby gets well fed.
> Then Baby starts to concentrate, and soon her face turns red.
> The air becomes so toxic our house plants start to droop!
> Baby gets her diaper changed and Daddy gets the...
> Love, love, love! How I love this baby!

Instead of confusion, this bait and switch gets a laugh from the audience. Perhaps less obviously, I also hope to drive home the point that changing poopy diapers is one way to love a baby.

Note that I didn't mess with the end of line two, or the middle of line three. I messed with the end of line four, where the listener's attention is most focused. This way the unexpected substitution cannot be missed or construed as a mistake; it's very clear to the listener what I did and why.

In conclusion, I submit to you my ultimate rule-breaking rule: "Never expect your listeners to forgive a broken rule."

Listeners don't choose to enjoy your song just to be nice to you. They experience natural reactions—good, bad, or indifferent—and listeners' natural reactions generally inform the rules of songwriting. So if you're thinking, "Maybe they'll forgive this broken rule," then go back and fix it, because they will not. On the other hand if you're thinking, "I broke a rule, and that's why this song is awesome!" then perhaps you created something brilliant, leaving nothing for your listeners to forgive. If so, their reactions will let you know!

## Thoughts To Chew

# A Key to the Story Vault

*by Peter Alsop*

The theme for this issue of *Pass It On!* is "the road less traveled." I think most Children's Music Network members are already on a less traveled path by virtue of what we do. Our other option, the Road Most Traveled, the Main Road, is lined with stories and lessons from our culture that immerse us as we grow up and teach us lessons such as "if you want to be happy, make as much money as you can!" These are lessons about how others in our culture want us to behave, sometimes patriotic and spiritually uplifting, but often laden with hidden messages that model various skills no longer relevant or useful for building an informed and conscious future for our planet. "Girls can't do that!" Or "Just follow the leaders. They know what's best for us!" These Main Road stories get absorbed through our skin and our ears and our eyes, and from the thousands of ads we see, in comments made by friends and parents, and in our rituals and the awards we give to our heroes. They are present in the behaviors we observe in our lives, in our media, movies, television, and Internet.

Early on, many of us started down the Road Most Traveled, but we stepped off and chose not to follow that path. We learned that the Main Road often requires blinders to stay on it. And yet, even with this knowledge, we still have our own Main Road stories stashed safely away in our secret story vaults.

It didn't take long to learn that playing music with kids and their families is not a yellow brick road to financial security, but nevertheless, we continue to sing! We found truth in a different story that proposed "playing music and singing songs may not make us lots of money, but it can bring us a rich life, full of meaning, fun, silliness, and joy!" As we travel our path we are reminded of the different choice we made when we see thousands of others still on the Main Road who used to sing or play an instrument but decided to stop because they believed an old Main Road story they were taught.

"I have a job!" they say, "what's the point of wasting my precious time practicing the bassoon? Can't make much money doing that!"

So what are some of these old stories we've hidden away, long forgotten, that still affect us and influence our ability to adapt to changes we need to make in this American culture of ours? There's always "Get as much attention as I can! Even negative attention is better than being ignored." Or "Why should I give up my privileges? I wouldn't have them if I didn't deserve them." These stories

reflect a less cooperative, less caring, and less just future, so what stories can we embrace on our "path less followed" that might help us lift ourselves and each other in these troubling times?

One of the strongest assets we have as family performers is knowing that our less traveled path can take us to the door of anyone's hidden "story vault." It's the place where each of us stores our most sacred stories, where we've internalized tales and images about who we are, what we are doing here, and how we want to be seen by others. The fire in our own bellies fuels our curiosity about the stories in our own vaults. That's what gives us the key to help others explore their own closely held stories. In turn, understanding our stories gives us the key to help others explore their own closely held beliefs. This is where change occurs! So many of the out-of-balance behaviors we see in others (and ourselves), come from the stories we hold to be true, but are no longer so.

So in our performances and on our recordings and with our song choices, we can share how we've confronted inaccurate stories we've been holding and model conscious decision-making so they will work better for us in our world.

When we were children, many of us believed that our fathers and mothers could do no wrong. Then, as we grew older, we changed that story and believed they could do nothing right! And as we became fathers and mothers ourselves, we shifted our story again to see our parents as people who mostly tried to do their best. Some of us learned about and added the element of forgiveness to our "parenting story"—not to condone things that our parents may have done, but because we learned that if we are to get unstuck from our old story, we have to learn to forgive so we can move on to another, more useful story about who our parents really are.

As children's performers and writers, many of us work hard to counteract the Main Road stories we've absorbed. We continue to explore our stories and listen with "new ears" to their teachings and morals. We alter old stories and give them new clarity. We make up and tell new stories. We write and sing songs to cultivate and pass on the idea that we can make a difference in creating a healthier, safer, more caring world. We make the effort because we know we can only teach that which we have learned.

After our concerts, we want the kids in our audience—and especially the parents and grandparents who are the keepers of the family stories—to have a clearer understanding of how our songs and stories affect and tailor our behaviors. We want them to explore with us how we can edit and positively transform the stories for ourselves and our families. My favorite response from the parents at a show is "As I listened to you tonight, I thought, gee! I do that to my kid! Maybe I ought to cut that out!"

Here is an old Main Road story of mine that I'm still exploring and working to change. It needs a readjustment, as it doesn't fit well with my current beliefs. As Battalion Commander of our high school corps of cadets at Admiral Farragut Academy, I felt proud of both my country and myself. I remember standing at attention on the parade grounds in full dress at "present arms!" My heart pounded to the strains of our band playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the gathered crowd solemnly recited the Pledge of Allegiance: "...one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

But now I wonder, "under God"? Which God? Does Allah count? What about Yahweh? Shiva? Jesus? And "liberty and justice" for whom? Rich people? Poor people? Does this apply to single moms? White males? Dreamers? Dark-

skinned people? I'm still lifted by so many of the high-minded ideals in our Constitution and our national heritage, but I'm not so proud of many of our actual behaviors. One of the Ten Commandments in the Bible is "Thou shalt not kill," and yet we have Christian political and religious leaders who sign off on drone attacks and will not take action on the simplest of gun control legislation. One of our biggest national exports is military arms.

A Main Road story I learned was that "the opposite of Love is Hate," but my story now is "the opposite of Love is Fear." That helps me understand why people are not so loving. They are afraid.

Cognitive dissonance is when a belief or story we hold does not match with our behavior. It's the conflict of an old belief or story crashing against circumstances that don't fit the old story. It's one of the major causes of post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. It happens when soldiers come home from what they thought was a "just war," and their story does not fit their experience, either overseas or upon return. It happens when children are abused by people they trust. It happens when the police officer on our corner does not act like he or she is really our friend. When our stories tell us that America is the "land of the free and the home of the brave," and we see and experience the overt racism in our judicial, legal, and prison systems and observe the widespread fear about anyone who is "different," it becomes difficult to reconcile the dissonance.

Fortunately we have artists, poets, and songwriters who hold up mirrors for us to see these conflicting stories, in the hopes that our collective discomfort becomes strong enough to goad us to take action to change our behaviors and disassociate ourselves from old stories that are no longer true. A powerful musical example is "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught," from South Pacific, written in 1949 by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. The thought-provoking lyrics resonate as if they were written yesterday, as unfortunately these Main Road issues of intolerance, racism, and non-acceptance of the others still confound our society today.

**You've Got to Be Carefully Taught**
*by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II*
*Copyright © 1949 by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Copyright renewed by Williamson Music, owner of publication and allied rights throughout the world. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.*

You've got to be taught to hate and fear,
You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear—
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade—
You've got to be carefully taught.
You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate—
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be carefully taught!

Here are a few Main Road stories you may have learned as a child. Do you believe them now?

"I cannot tell a lie."
*—General George Washington*

"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."
*—The Bible, I Corinthians, 14:34-35*

*Tootle (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25620120-tootle)*, a Little Golden Book by Gertrude Crampton, was one of the stories in my vault that I loved as a kid. It was about a little train that didn't want to stay on the tracks, even though Engineer Bill told him to "always stay on the tracks!" Tootle went off the tracks and ran in the flowering fields with his friend, a black pony, and he came home to the wheelhouse every night with flowers and mud lodged in his driving wheels. Finally, fed up with Tootle's behavior (oppositional defiant disorder wasn't invented yet!), Engineer Bill got all the townspeople to hide behind bushes with red signs forcing Tootle to get back on the track and stay… like a good little train should! Strangely, when I saw the book again as an adult, I only remembered the "let's get off the tracks and into the mud" part of the story. Egad! I was astonished at the message about the importance of such strict adherence to following the rules. It ended poorly for Tootle, in my opinion, as he was forced back onto the Road Most Traveled. He tried the "path less traveled" and was ostracized and punished for it!

Some of us write songs to help kids grow up with a different, more empowered story.

**My Body (http://www.peteralsop.com/song/my-body-1)**
*by Peter Alsop (http://www.peteralsop.com/)*
*© 1983, Moose School Music (BMI)*

My body's nobody's body but mine
You run your own body, let me run mine!
Sometimes it's hard to say "No!" and be strong
When those "No!" feelings come, then I know something's wrong
'Cause my body's mine from my head to my toe
Please leave it alone when you hear me say "No!"

If we are not storytellers or songwriters, we can share or perform songs and stories that overflow with wonderful messages. Besides their inherent value, they are a gift for us when we use them to help us do our own personal work. Here are a few stories for kids that have really helped many families make these discoveries.

"You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."
*—Margery Williams, The Velveteen Rabbit (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/144974.The_Velveteen_Rabbit)*

"A person's a person, no matter how small!"

*—Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss), Horton Hears A Who (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7779.Horton_Hears_a_Who_?from_search=true)*

"It is far more difficult to judge oneself than to judge others. If you succeed in judging yourself correctly, then you are truly a man of wisdom."
*—Antoine de Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince (http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/157993.The_Little_Prince?ac=1&from_search=true)*

It's because we journey on the "less traveled path" that we have an informed perspective and an opportunity to help parents cope with many of the complicated issues we face while raising our children in these difficult times. We have a key to the door of their secret story vault, and through our songs and stories, we have a pulpit to gently model, share, and pass on some of what we've learned about ourselves to help parents explore and exchange some of their own old stories for new and different songs and tales. As each of us learns to match our outside behaviors with our inside stories, the world becomes more caring, and the less traveled path becomes easier for the kids, the parents, and all of us.

**A Special Note from Stuart Stotts:**
CMN is a great forum for practical career questions such as "What kind of sound system? How to get booked? Contracts? Song topics?" It's also a place to address larger questions about philosophy, values, and social change. As artists, we need time, space, and support to reflect and explore the purposes of our work, including areas that may challenge our preconceptions and habits.

Peter Alsop's "Thoughts to Chew" column has for many years offered perspectives on these larger questions that often linger in the corners of our minds. In the future, Peter and I have agreed to collaborate together to offer responses to your big questions, in kind of a "Dear Abby" format. Please send them directly to Stuart at Stuart@stotts.com. We will endeavor to enlighten, empathize, explore, and hopefully entertain you in response to what you send in. Thanks!

# Presidents' Message

## A New Paradigm for CMN's Future

*Katherine Dines and David Heitler-Klevans*
*CMN Co-Presidents*

We are trying something new in the leadership structure of CMN. As of October 2016, CMN has not one but two Presidents. Katherine Dines and David Heitler-Klevans are now Co-Presidents of this wonderful organization. David thought that as we have been moving towards shared leadership in other aspects of CMN, such as Regional Co-Coordinators, why not try this at the presidential level? After all, CMN is all about sharing!

We have both been involved in CMN since the early '90s, and we have both been on the CMN Board for a number of years now. Katherine is actually one of the few CMNers who has served on the Board at two separate times in CMN's history. We are excited to take on this new leadership role, especially with the current Board, which includes brand-new people who are bringing new skills, ideas, and energy to our organization.

We have set some exciting goals for 2017. At the heart is the issue of diversity and how CMN can connect with more diverse populations (in terms of race/ethnicity, age, geographic location, etc.) and attract more members. Jessica Smith and Alina Celeste will lead a new committee as part of the CMN Advisory Board to come up with new ideas and strategies. The Board is also planning a retreat with a facilitator to learn skills and share ideas on how to set goals, with diversity in mind, more effectively.

The Membership Committee is exploring new programs that will accommodate organizations without sufficient budget to become members. We are also working on initiating a Mentor program, led by new Board member Bruce O'Brien, to extend the resource sharing that happens at the Conference into year-round interactions. We have become increasingly aware of the fact that YOU are CMN's most valuable resource, and that CMNers are wonderfully willing to share their skills and knowledge with others. This is often what draws new members into CMN, and what makes them want to stay engaged.

Our marketing team, headed up by new Board member Alice Burba, has plans to further our reach by implementing a targeted social media program; marketing our impressive online journal, *Pass It On!* through our new Online Subscription option; and creating outreach to help make this year's conference the best attended ever. New Board member Dennis Ronberg has taken on the role of overseeing our Business Sponsor program. If you know any businesses you think might want to participate, make sure to reach out.

Executive Board member Lisa Heintz and volunteer members Marla Lewis and Theresa Heintz-Jones are preparing our Song Library

(https://childrensmusic.org/songs/)'s next wonderful collection. In keeping with our theme for the year, the new multicultural songbook is all about diversity, containing songs in various languages and music that celebrates all peoples. We are actively searching for songs, so be sure to submit!

The Fundraising Committee is on a roll with three new active members: Tim Seston, Valerie Smalkin, and Jenny Murphy. They are busily creating innovative plans for generating more income, as well as seeking grants to fund scholarships, the Song Library, and this year's conference. We'll be sponsoring at least one screening of *Imba Means Sing* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTOmXwebTa8).

And as always, the highlight of the year is our 2017 Annual International Conference in Hyannis, Massachusetts, October 13–15. The theme of the conference this year is "All the Way Around the World" (from the song (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky7GattLj-s) by Katherine Dines), which will serve as the rallying cry for all our efforts. Conference Co-Chairs Kim Wallach, Diana Kane, and Philip Alexander are already at work planning a super event, so make sure to put it on your calendar!

As any Board member will tell you, nonprofits take a lot of time and energy. Yet so far, this role sharing seems to be more efficient and a LOT more fun. You don't have to be on the Board to give ideas and help plan CMN activities, both at the regional level and for the organization as a whole. We encourage any CMN member to become more actively involved in growing CMN.

# How Can We Keep from Singing in the Rain!

*by Carole Stephens*

Los Gatos, California, October 2016. Yes, we sang, danced, and networked. Yes, it rained from arrival to departure. No, it didn't dampen the spirits of those gathered for the annual Children's Music Network Annual International Conference. My weekend started with hellos and hugs in the Registration area. I've been coming to CMN conferences for fifteen years, and I still get excited to see CMN friends that I only see once each year. Hoping for longer conversations as the weekend progresses—and knowing that it doesn't always happen—I have to settle for "good to see you" with many.

I don't eat much at our conferences, as I'm talking and listening with new friends and old during meals. I don't sleep much, either, grabbing a hallway chat or a late-night sotto voce share. I don't miss either, as what fills me up and refreshes me is the music and connections.

Highlights for me this year included dancing my feet off at Friday night's contra dance, making it to all four workshop sessions, and the keynote presentation. The dance provided initial eye contact and hand-holding opportunities that I could build upon over the weekend—any one of them could be a friend I'll have ten years from now. The workshops—oh, what a jackpot of songs and ideas I pocketed in the Early Childhood Songswap and Jane Cobb's (http://blacksheeppress.myshopify.com) "The Power of Song to Foster Attachment." I immediately began sharing what I learned with my classes upon my return to Chicago.

Then there was Melanie DeMore. As chair of the Keynote Committee, I anticipated an inspiring presentation. As I wrote Melanie's introduction, I was struck with the vastness of her experience as a singer, composer, activist, and choral director. I spoke with her briefly upon her arrival. She was self-assured, composed, and ready to get down to business.

Melanie took the stage with a simple "I am a fortunate person—I get to sing every day all over the world," and began to sing "Gonna Be a Great Day!" How right she was! She imparted many "think about this" moments that resonated in my brain after the presidential election a few weeks later:

- Be visible in the world.
- Walk in the world as your true self. Find a voice for all people.

- Rise up and shine. We are the 99!
- "Yes, I can do that. I just don't know how yet. Show me how!"
- Liberate yourself. Then go back and bring someone else with you across the line.

We sang with Melanie. We were uplifted and challenged by Melanie. We were given the gift of Melanie. Amen, Miss Melanie DeMore!

That was just the first twenty-four hours! The Round-Robin, mentoring, networking, and Magic Penny Award Ceremony honoring José-Luis Orozco (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/an-interview-with-jose-luis-orozco.aspx) were all yet to come. I had to leave during the Closing Circle, but the conference had yet one final highlight before I skedaddled: Galen Brandt's newly penned anthem "We Will Go High" was reprised, this time sung full-throated by all assembled. Tears in my eyes, I stumbled from the room. CMN had done it again—lifted me up, inspired me to be a better me, brought me future friends, and sent me home with a brain bursting with music. See you next year? You bet!

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

# First-Timer Reflections on Los Gatos, 2016

*by Steve Eulberg*

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

I had been encouraged to join CMN many years ago by my friend and Local 1000 American Federation of Musicians (AFM), colleague Deborah Van Kleef. So I finally did, while living in Colorado, but did little with the membership besides receive the e-mail digest.

Just as I was about to unsubscribe from the listserv, I received an e-mail query from Pam Donkin, who was seeking a children's music teacher in San Mateo, California—the very town to which I was moving!

Thus began my delightful adventure as a teacher in Peninsula Music Together.

The CMN conference was so close to home, and despite its conflicting dates with another music conference that I have been going to for years, I was encouraged by Pam Donkin to attend this one. I arranged for substitute teaching for my classes so I could take advantage of the entire experience.

From the beginning welcome to the closing songs, hard rain was our constant companion, and a little "hardship" has a way of making strangers laugh and share some camaraderie in the common experience.

*(photos by Kayte Deioma)*

Open faces, smiles, helpfulness, inquiries, support, and delight were what greeted me in every part of the conference. The Newbies welcome meeting, the Shabbat gathering, talking with interesting people during dinners, and the wide array of musical exploration by colleagues filled me with hope and energy. Being welcomed to play hammered dulcimer in the contra-dance band and being encouraged to share a song in the Round-Robin went a long way toward helping me find my footing in a new crowd. These are my natural ways of relating, and seeing so many other kindred folk who rank very high on the SQ (Silly Quotient) meter felt like I was coming

home. Melanie DeMore's keynote on Saturday, a mentoring session, the workshops that I attended and one I led (Crowdfunding) were all highlights. My only regret was that I was unable to work a physical tough massage into the schedule! My heart, however, was well massaged by the joy and gratitude, commitment and energy of the gathering.

I am so grateful to finally have been able to attend and receive resources and connections that support my daily life, and work to help people sing their soul.

# Magic Penny

*by Laurie Vela*

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

The 2016 Magic Penny Award Ceremony maintained its fine tradition of honoring an inspirational contributor to the field of children's music. This year's recipient, José-Luis Orozco (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/an-interview-with-jose-luis-orozco.aspx), has indeed enriched the world, creating bilingual children's music, books, and videos for more than forty years. Our appreciative CMN audience sang along with many of his songs during the presentation.

Joanie Calem and Jenny Heitler-Klevins, members of the Magic Penny Committee, related the history of the award beautifully, and fittingly transitioned into a celebration of José-Luis. CMNers Nancy Schimmel and Bonnie Lockhart opened by leading us all in the Magic Penny song written by Nancy's mother, Malvina Reynolds. The song encompasses the heart of both the award and the recipient with the lyrical affirmation, "Love is something if you give it away / you end up having more."

José-Luis's presence was joyful, humble, and grateful, and the room was filled with his generous spirit. He embodied the love he has for music, children, and sharing the Spanish language and Latin American culture through song. Family and friends were there to help honor him and celebrate his lifetime accomplishments with sincere appreciation.

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

During the ceremony, many CMNers shared how the songs of José-Luis Orozco have inspired them and impacted their work. This was evidenced in the rousing performances in English and Spanish. Led from the stage by CMNers, the whole audience sang and moved as one, even those of us who were new to this wonderful work. The songs were often very playful, like "Un Elefante" and "El Burrito Enfermo." Yet perhaps the most powerful song was "Paz Y Libertad," which we sang together, standing in a kind of choral ovation for Orozco, who was moved enough to come to the stage and share his thoughts and songs. He spoke of his musical childhood: learning songs from his grandmother and traveling the world singing with the Mexico City Boy's Choir. He affirmed the great importance of

not only his own work with and for children, but all of ours. He championed the culture we all share: to sing, pass on language, culture, and values.

José-Luis exuberantly exclaimed, “This is a great day!” both from the stage and in a one-on-one conversation with me. I believe that being so warmly received by the CMN community truly touched his soul.

In the end, we all rose again to reprise “Paz Y Libertad” with José-Luis leading us in that great song that speaks directly to the main tenet of CMN. Jenny Heitler-Klevins added sign language as our voices proclaimed, “Para los niños de todo el mundo queremos paz y libertad.” “For all the children of the world, we want peace and freedom.”

Thank you, José-Luis Orozco, for a lifetime of giving your love away to the children of the world—and to us! May you end up having more.

# Magic Penny

*by Andy Zamenes*

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

Every year I have attended the CMN Annual International Conference has been a special and reenergizing experience—reuniting and communing with kind-hearted and like-minded friends whom I consider family. And this year's conference in Los Gatos, CA was no different. But what made it extra special was the opportunity to be a part of the Magic Penny Award ceremony honoring José-Luis Orozco (https://childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/an-interview-with-jose-luis-orozco.aspx), a man whom I consider one of my mentors in the realm of children's music.

I only recently met José-Luis in February 2016 when he performed at the Children's Grammy Award Nominees Benefit Concert in Los Angeles. His latest album, *¡Come Bien! Eat Right!* (http://www.folkways.si.edu/news-and-press/jose-luis-orozco-come-bien-eat-right), had been nominated for a Grammy, and he was asked to perform, as are all the year's nominees in the Children's Album category. I approached him after his performance and introduced myself as a fellow children's music artist, a big fan and follower of his, a Board member of CMN, and one of the many to honor him at the upcoming Magic Penny Award ceremony in Los Gatos.

However, it wasn't until later, at the nominees luncheon after the concert, that I was able to tell him how his bilingual recordings of songs and music in Spanish contributed to my early development as a children's educator, performer, and recording artist. I could tell he was honored to be the recipient of the Magic Penny Award, and I thought it fitting that he'd be receiving the award in the San Francisco Bay Area, a place where he spent many years performing, teaching, and advocating for those who did not come from a privileged background. My fairly brief conversation with him over lunch ended with me saying that I would see him soon, and we went on with our busy weekends.

Around Grammy time, I was asked by Joanie Calem to perform a song at his award ceremony, and of course, I jumped at the chance. Then during the CMN conference weekend, I was able to enlist two talented fellow CMNers, Alina Celeste and Peter Apel, to join me onstage during the ceremony to perform "Al Tambor." I've heard José-Luis say with regards to arranging and recording children's music that "simple is better," so I wanted to keep our rendition of the Latin American classic as much in that spirit as possible. Alina, Peter, and I got together quickly and established our harmony vocal parts and instrumentation with that "spirit" in mind.

My personal challenge was to figure out what I was going to say before the song. In fact, I was a bit nervous about it. But instead of letting my worrying take over, I just said what came to my mind and what I was feeling at the time. That's quite often the best way to do it, for me anyway. So when the time came, I started by sharing with everyone the lore passed on to me by others in my hometown of Redwood City in the Bay Area. I told them of the excitement and electricity around José-Luis's performances, how families would show up in droves to see one of his concerts that often occurred at the main library, how the crowd would spill over into the area outside of the performance space. Then I then simply thanked him from my heart for all he has done for children and children's music.

*(photo by Kayte Deioma)*

Yes, simple is better.

And performing "Al Tambor"—what an incredible experience to see everyone in attendance dancing and singing, and then glancing over at José-Luis who was wearing a grin of great contentment. The feeling of joy between us—my fellow performers, and everyone in that room—truly encapsulates what CMN is all about and why I keep doing whatever I can to get to these conferences to commune with my CMN family.

The whole of the ceremony was wonderful, and all the speakers and performers did a fantastic job…"job" meaning "labor of love" of course. And it showed.

Afterwards, everyone gathered for the Closing Circle where impressions from the past few days and heartfelt messages were shared. Although I was outside of the circle at the time, gathering sound accessories as part of my stagehand duties, I inevitably ended up stopping and sitting at the foot of the stage, truly moved as attendees laughed, cried, and said goodbye to this year's conference.

I glanced over at José-Luis, who was also outside of the circle, observing and listening attentively as stories were shared. This was a surreal, poignant moment for me personally. There's José-Luis Orozco, not being honored, not performing, and not the focal point, simply listening, caring, and being in the moment with all of us.

I not only feel blessed for the opportunity to pay homage to a legend in the field, but to be able to share with José-Luis—and everyone gathered there—how we appreciate him, his advocacy for embracing and celebrating diversity, his art, and his heart.

# CMN Connections

*by Phil Hoose*

*(photo by Tim Crow)*

On February 28 I visited Taylor Middle School in Taylor, Texas. Taylor School, situated on some remarkably flat land, is not the home of the Wildcats, Grizzlies, or Rattlers. They are the Taylor Ducks. That day I presented material to the school's sixth, seventh, and eighth graders about the powerful but often overlooked role young people have played in shaping US history. At the conclusion of each presentation, the students and I had a spirited discussion about young activists and about what it had been like to write such a book as my *We Were There Too! Young People in U.S. History* (http://www.phillihoose.com/books/we-were-there-too/). Where had I found the stories? Were there more of them? How long did it take to write it? I told them that I was in the process of updating the book, published in 2001. What, I asked them, did they think should be in a new, revised edition?

At the day's conclusion, a student presented me with a check for $82.63 for the Children's Music Network. They had been doing some research and had discovered that CMN is special to me. The students of Taylor passed the hat and came up with the sum above. I think that's the first time that's ever happened to me, and I am quite impressed and moved. I hope CMN can establish and maintain a connection with the kind and history-loving Ducks of Taylor Middle School.

# New Sounds

*Compiled by Barbara Rice*

*Note: These descriptions of new releases are sent in by the CMN members mentioned, but they may have been edited by* Pass It On! *staff for style, consistency, or length. The materials have not been reviewed. In addition to the sources listed, many recordings are available at local independent children's book and record stores.*

**Val Smalkin**
*Love Bug!*

Chock full of songs for dancing, laughing, hugging, and singing for ages two to eight, Parents' Choice Recommended *Love Bug!* is Val Smalkin's follow-up to her Parents' Choice Approved *Sing! Sing! Sing!…and Dance*, which followed on the heels of her Parents' Choice Fun Stuff CD, *A Gentle Halloween*. Three of the twelve songs on *Love Bug!* are traditional children's songs; the others were written, arranged, and performed by Val with the addition of Mark Stocker on keyboards and Chris Savage on drums at 4:30 Entertainment Studios in Baltimore, Maryland. The 32-page downloadable *Love Bug! Songbook (& Activities for Early Childhood)* is available with the purchase of each CD. It contains lead sheets and lesson plans for all twelve songs…surely a "go to" item for last-minute teaching plans or rainy day activities.

Val was inspired to write *Love Bug!* because of the Saturday night family dances she attended as a child, and because she noticed in her performances that there is nothing children like more than dancing with Mom, Dad, GrandMom, GrandDad, Auntie, Uncle, or any other caregiver.

Physical CDs and downloadable files are available at Small Kin Music (http://www.smallkinmusic.com/shop-now), Kidzmusic (http://kidzmusic.com/portfolio_page/valerie-smalkin/), CD Baby, Amazon, and Songs for Teaching.

**Margaret Bernstein / Azalea Blossom**
*Songs from SAFE Through the Arts*

*Songs from SAFE Through the Arts* is a compilation of original songs, which Margaret Bernstein wrote specifically for the SAFE Through the Arts bullying prevention program. She was inspired to write the songs and create the program because she knew how strongly music can be as a force for positive change. The songs are all written around three key components of the program—Self-Affirmation, Financial Literacy, and Education of Non-violence—and are geared towards four and five

year olds.

All the songs have accompanying lessons as part of the SAFE Through the Arts program but also stand alone as inspirational children's songs. In the program, the songs are "sung" by sixteen unique puppet characters who represent the cultural diversity of New York City public schools. The artists that sing/play these characters are Margaret Bernstein, Will Stone, Pyeng Threadgill, Faith Ahmed, Nicolai Moderbacher, and Barb Morrison. Available on CD Baby.

**Wayne Potash**
*Rock & Roll Party*

Wayne's newest album will be released in late March 2017. The album features sixteen rock 'n' roll songs for kids aged two and older. Wayne has been singing all these songs in classrooms and concerts for years, so they are all kid-tested! In addition to the ten original songs (many of them co-written with groups of children), there are kid-friendly versions of songs by Aerosmith, The Who, George Thorogood, and John Lee Hooker. Producer Safety Mouse has enlisted the help of several professional Boston-area rock 'n' roll musicians to make sure that the songs really rock out, and they do!

*Rock & Roll Party* is available on Amazon, iTunes, CD Baby, and waynepotash.com (http://waynepotash.com).

**Charlotte Thistle / Miss Charlotte**
*A Spoonful of Songs*

Welcome to a world where colorful adventures lie around every corner —where the itsy bitsy spider isn't the only one to climb up the waterspout and classic children's songs are reimagined in new and exciting ways.

In the world of Miss Charlotte's award-winning children's CD, *A Spoonful of Songs*, you'll find a collection of twenty-one unique tunes young children can enjoy with teachers and parents. From nursery rhymes and traditional children's songs from around the world, to creative originals penned by Miss Charlotte and her friends, this collection is an eclectic collection of classic, redone, and brand-new tunes that will help you get little ones engaged in music at home or in the classroom.

So get playful with a rhythmic rap version of "The Three Little Pigs," or sing your heart out with the soulful "I'm Gonna Let My Mommy Spin Me Around." Winner of a 2016 Parents' Choice Silver Honor, *A Spoonful of Songs* is also a great way to keep the kids amused on road trips!

**Kayte Deioma / Auntie Kayte**
*Rufus the Unicorn and other Upside-Down Fairytale Songs*

Auntie Kayte's new album is full of irresistibly catchy original songs that use the power of music and words to plant seeds of self-confidence, creative thinking, responsibility, and social consciousness in kids from pre-school through grade school. Auntie Kayte enchants children in the manner of Mary Poppins with a voice that transitions easily from high-energy reggae and calypso to folk ballads and even a marching band.

Inspired by conversations with her nephew and nieces, Auntie Kayte wrote songs to give a unique spin to classic storybook characters that relate them to real life issues. We're introduced to smart princesses, responsible cowboys, pirates with families, and an identity-challenged unicorn. The joyfully entertaining songs create opportunities to talk with kids about appropriate consequences, being happy with who you are, and playing with people who are different from you. We learn to start the day in a good mood, practice the art of saying "I'm Sorry," discover the value of a rainy day, learn some funny "Good Old Words" and laugh ourselves healthy and happy with "Giggly You and Me." Teaching and discussion notes and related exercises are available to download from the website.

The CD is available at www.auntiekayte.com (http://www.auntiekayte.com) as well as on CD Baby, Amazon, iTunes and Songs for Teaching.

**John Cullimore / Chibi Kodama**
*Between Main Street and Neverland*

Between Main Street and Neverland

The result of a crazy, roller coaster year, *Between Main Street and Neverland* is the soundtrack of how John's family lived and loved while breaking through walls of fear; questioning beliefs no matter how frightening; dealing with trauma, criticism, anxieties; and searching for who they really are. They learned together as a family to let love, and NOT fear, have its way. John says, "Share our story. We want you to dance with us, look in the mirror, smile, laugh, and know that it's okay to be you. We want to give you this energetic and non-stop album, full of big guitars, beats, synths, and fun melodies so you can rock out with your family too."

Purchase at www.chibikodamamusic.com (http://www.chibikodamamusic.com)

**Dana Cohenour / Dana**
*Dana's Best Jump & Jam Tunes*

After taking a break from recording to raise her son, Jack, Dana is pleased to be jumping back into creating music for children once again. Her previous five albums have won seventeen national awards and wide acclaim from critics, educators, and families.

*Dana's Jump & Jam Tunes* is filled with hoppin' and boppin' fun for children ages one to seven. Using clever lyrics, groovy beats, and funny characters, Dana and her talented band introduce young children to numerous musical styles including jazz, rock, country, pop, and bluegrass. Perfect for the toddler and preschool set, the songs engage little imaginations and inspire kids to literally "jump" right into the music.

The collection includes counting songs ("Legs" and a bluegrass spin of "Five Green and Speckled Frogs"), a Mexican freeze dance ("Jumping Beans"), a rock 'n' roll "Wiggle Workout," an egg shake ("Shakin' Things Up"), and of course, a jazzy jumping jive dance ("Jump and Jive"). Children will laugh and sing along to Dana's story songs ("Barnyard Hoedown" and "Fish Tale"), help make the planet smile with her catchy "Do My Part," and bring out the pots and pans in "Grandma's Kitchen Band." Kids won't be able to resist moving like all kinds of animals in "Follow the Leader," and then finally wind down with the gentle musical hug that is "I Love Mommy."

Available at iTunes, CDBaby, and danasmusicplayground.com

(http://danasmusicplayground.com). Pre-order available now at bandcamp.com (http://bandcamp.com) (official release date: April 15, 2017).

**Kate Carpenter / "Mrs. Kate" Carpenter**
*I Think I Can*

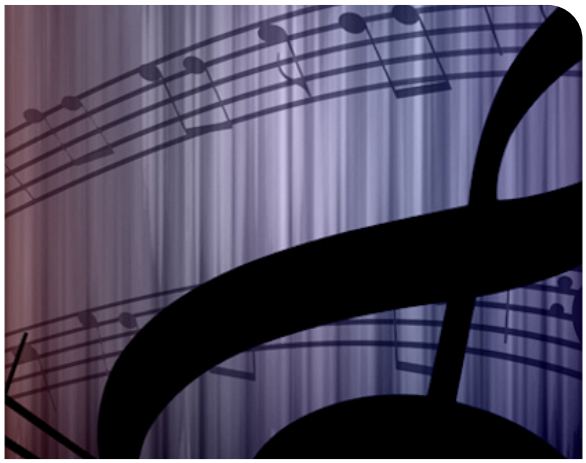
All aboard! Hop on the train with "Mrs. Kate" Carpenter as she and her young singers present twelve catchy new songs for kids aged five to twelve. Kate says:

"I had a whole bunch of new motivational songs for kids and had begun work on producing a CD, but needed a theme to pull it all together. While visiting with friends on my tour, I was challenged to write a train song for a jam. I said, 'I Think I Can!' and the song nearly wrote itself and became the title track for this high-energy project.

"Many songs have a special story: Everyone loves the song about 'Forgetful Ned.' He is a real person! When Ned was in elementary school, he was on the NanaTunes vocal team. Every time he would come to practice or the recording sessions, he would leave something behind. I wrote the song about him. He loves it. I wrote 'Let's Exercise' to motivate kids to spend less time on their screens. Check out the exciting music video (https://youtu.be/EjCFrLm39HU) we made of this song, featuring kid gymnasts. 'Be a Friend' is a powerfully emotional song that will encourage kids to reach out to the friendless and stamp out bullying. Our daughter, Teri, who knows what it's like to be the new kid in class, challenged me to write that song. Guidance counselors are excited about using this song to motivate kids."

Purchase at www.MrsKate.com (http://www.MrsKate.com). Also available on CD Baby, iTunes, Amazon, and Songs for Teaching.

# About *Pass It On!*



*Pass It On!* has scores of songs to sing: all are for children, some are by children; some are serious, others lighthearted. It offers in-depth interviews with performers, teachers, musicians, and storytellers—who have included children's music legends such as Ella Jenkins, Jean Ritchie, Pete Seeger, and Raffi—and columns, news, and information about using music in the classroom, the roots, history, and growth of children's music, and much more.

**CMN members receive access to all issues of *Pass It On!*** **Join Now**

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## How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

**Articles**
*Pass It On!* always needs stories from members about what they're doing and

how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

**Songs**
Most of the songs published in *Pass It On!* are contributed by CMN members, and we welcome songs written by people from various parts of the continent or the world. Please share your works with us.

**New Sounds**
Children's Music Network members, please send a description of your new releases within the last year to be included on the New Sounds page.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission to *Pass It On!*

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